

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS  
OF  
THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

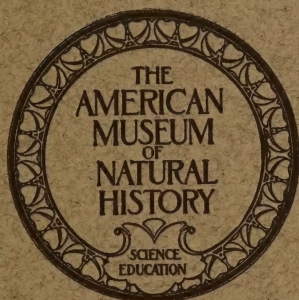
---

VOLUME XXX, PART IV

---

HIDATSA EAGLE TRAPPING

BY GILBERT LIVINGSTONE WILSON



BY ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES  
OF

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

NEW YORK CITY

1928



## PUBLICATIONS IN ANTHROPOLOGY

In 1906 the present series of Anthropological Papers was authorized by the Trustees of the Museum to record the results of research conducted by the Department of Anthropology. The series comprises octavo volumes of about 350 pages each, issued in parts at irregular intervals. Previous to 1906 articles devoted to anthropological subjects appeared as occasional papers in the Bulletin and also in the Memoir series of the Museum. Of the Anthropological Papers 26 volumes have been completed and 4 volumes have been issued in part. A complete list of these publications with prices will be furnished when requested. All communications should be addressed to the Librarian of the Museum.

The current issue is:—

### VOLUME XXX

I. A Correction for Artificial Deformation of Skulls. By H. L. Shapiro. Pp. 1-38. 1928. Price, \$.35.

II. Supplementary Notes on the Quipus in the American Museum of Natural History. By L. Leland Locke. Pp. 39-73, and 1 text figure. 1928. Price, \$.35.

III. An Aboriginal Salt Mine at Camp Verde, Arizona. By Earl H. Morris. Pp. 75-97, and 12 text figures. 1928. Price, \$.30.

IV. Hidatsa Eagle Trapping. By Gilbert Livingstone Wilson. Pp. 99-245, and 25 text figures. 1928. Price \$1.50.

V. (In press.)

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS  
OF  
THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

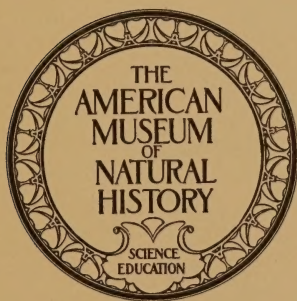
---

VOLUME XXX, PART IV

---

HIDATSA EAGLE TRAPPING

By GILBERT LIVINGSTONE WILSON



By ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES  
OF  
THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
NEW YORK CITY  
1928







HIDATSA EAGLE TRAPPING  
By GILBERT LIVINGSTONE WILSON





# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	105
AN EAGLE HUNT . . . . .	108
The Initiation and Preparation for the Hunt . . . . .	109
The First Camp . . . . .	112
The Paunch Bucket . . . . .	112
The Pits . . . . .	113
Elks . . . . .	119
Catfish . . . . .	120
The Cover Frame . . . . .	121
The Skin Boiling Kettle . . . . .	123
Ceremonial Weeping . . . . .	124
Finishing the Eagle Pits . . . . .	124
Drying the Meat . . . . .	125
Ceremonial Weeping by the Hunters . . . . .	127
Preparing the Bait . . . . .	128
Placing the Bait at the Pit . . . . .	128
The First Eagle . . . . .	131
Plucking the Plumes . . . . .	132
Tying out the Eagle in Camp . . . . .	132
The Others Report . . . . .	132
Fats and their Preparation . . . . .	133
The Hunting Lodge . . . . .	134
An Elk is Killed . . . . .	135
Another Eagle . . . . .	136
A Third Eagle . . . . .	137
Reports of the Other Hunters . . . . .	138
Releasing the Eagles . . . . .	139
Meeting Friends . . . . .	139
What Became of My Eagle Feathers . . . . .	140
EAGLE TRAPPING CEREMONIES . . . . .	142
Re-building an old Hunting Lodge . . . . .	142
Small-ankle offers Prayers . . . . .	145
Digging the Fireplace . . . . .	145
The Evening Meal in Camp . . . . .	148
Apportioning Places for the Beds . . . . .	149
Burning Incense . . . . .	150
Stick-and-Calico Offerings to the Eagles . . . . .	152
Myth of the Black Bears . . . . .	156
Plans for marking the Pits . . . . .	156
Story Telling and Ceremonies . . . . .	156
Robes . . . . .	158
Grass Pillows and Bedding . . . . .	159
Breakfast and Preparations . . . . .	159
Pit Sites are Selected . . . . .	161
Hunting Meat for Bait . . . . .	161

	PAGE
Piercing the Bait . . . . .	162
Thrusting Sticks in the Bait . . . . .	163
The Snare and Pipe . . . . .	163
The Morning Fire . . . . .	165
Preparing to go to the Pits . . . . .	165
Making the Beds . . . . .	167
Rules respecting Women . . . . .	168
The Wailing Custom . . . . .	169
The First Eagle . . . . .	169
The Second Eagle . . . . .	173
The Others Report . . . . .	173
Ceremonies with Pipe . . . . .	174
The Dance; Tasting the Eagle Feather . . . . .	175
The Corn Ball Loaf . . . . .	177
The Kettle Songs . . . . .	178
Traditions of Spring Trapping . . . . .	178
Breakfast . . . . .	179
Votive Self-Torture . . . . .	179
Return of the Hunters . . . . .	181
Torture of No-first-finger . . . . .	181
Torture by Suspension . . . . .	183
Another Day of Eagle Trapping . . . . .	185
Story of Itä'ka-xi'dic . . . . .	187
More Eagles . . . . .	194
Sweatbath Ceremonies . . . . .	195
Ceremonies before the Last Trial at the Pits . . . . .	197
Small-ankle prays over the Bait . . . . .	199
Use of Decoy Eagles . . . . .	200
Putting Blood on the Bait . . . . .	202
Putting the Eagles to Sleep . . . . .	204
The Sweatbath and Ceremonies . . . . .	207
Last Days in Camp . . . . .	211
ADDITIONAL NOTES . . . . .	212
Migrating Eagles . . . . .	212
Goodbird and the Old Eagle Pit . . . . .	212
The Buffalo Pit . . . . .	213
STORY OF FRINGE-WING . . . . .	214
THE SACRED PIPE OF THE BLACK BEAR CEREMONIES . . . . .	217
Objects in the Bundle . . . . .	225
NOTES ON CAPTIVE EAGLES, OTHER BIRDS, AND ANIMALS . . . . .	227
Captive Eagles . . . . .	228
Captive Prairie Grouse . . . . .	239
Ducks and Geese . . . . .	242
Animals in Captivity . . . . .	243
Taming a Coyote . . . . .	243
Human suckling of Animal Young . . . . .	245



# ILLUSTRATIONS

## TEXT FIGURES

	PAGE
1. <i>a</i> , Cylindrical Rawhide Bag; <i>b</i> , Paunch; <i>c</i> , A Paunch Bucket; <i>d</i> , Sketch showing the Manner of using a Digging-Stick . . . . .	110
2. Map showing the Location of Crow-flies-high's Village . . . . .	115
3. Map of Eagle Hunting Camp and Vicinity . . . . .	116
4. Vertical Section, East and West, of Map of Eagle Hunting Camp shown in Fig. 3 . . . . .	116
5. <i>a</i> , Completed Frame for Eagle Pit Cover; <i>b</i> , Construction of Framework on which Meat was hung for Roasting; <i>c</i> , Goodbird's Sketch of a Model of the Framework of the Hunting Lodge . . . . .	122
6. <i>a</i> , Method of securing the Tying Thongs to the Bait; <i>b</i> , Method of seizing the Eagle after it has alighted on the Bait; <i>c</i> , Diagram showing the Position of the Eagle Hunter within the Pit and the Manner of securing the Bait to the Pit Wall . . . . .	130
7. Diagrammatic Sketch of Small-ankle's Eagle Hunters' Lodge . . . . .	143
8. <i>a</i> , Diagram showing Positions of seated Participants and of Sacred Objects before the Eagle Hunting Lodge; <i>b</i> , The Seating Arrangements in the Lodge and the Maneuvers of the Participants; <i>c</i> , Diagram showing Position of Men in Front of the Door, facing the Fire Pit; <i>d</i> , Diagram representing the Fireplace and Snake Sticks of an Eagle Hunter's Lodge . . . . .	144
9. Diagram of Interior of Ceremonial Lodge showing Position of Participants . . . . .	150
10. <i>a</i> , A Grass Pillow shown in Position against the Snake Stick; <i>b</i> , A Bunch of White Eagle Feathers and Snare . . . . .	159
11. <i>a</i> , Sketch of an Eagle's Talons; <i>b</i> , Technique for weaving Eagle Tail Feathers into a Fan with Sinew; <i>c</i> , Manner of holding the Eagle Feathers and Snare; <i>d</i> , Method of Tying Thong to the Foot of a Captured Eagle; <i>e</i> , Method of skewering Meat and attaching the Thongs for swinging the Meat over the Fire . . . . .	166
12. The Eagle Hunters' Ceremonial Tipi with the Shelter for the Captured Eagles in the Right Background . . . . .	172
13. Sketch to show Method of roasting a Side of Meat . . . . .	180
14. <i>a</i> , Manner of carrying Eagle to the Pit when the Bird was used as a Decoy; <i>b</i> , Throwing the Robe over the Eagle, preparatory to choking It; <i>c</i> , Strangling the Eagle with a Noose . . . . .	201
15. <i>a</i> , A Peeled Stick to which Broad-Leafed Sage has been bound, Ready for tying over the Sweatlodge Door; <i>b</i> , Fringe-wing, the Chief of the Eagles; <i>c</i> , Stone and Stick for Stick and Round Stone Gambling Game . . . . .	207
16. Three Snares: <i>a</i> , A Snowbird Snare; <i>b</i> , A Long Snare Laid on Two Poles in the Place of Honor in the Eagle Hunting Lodge; <i>c</i> , A Rabbit Snare . . . . .	219
17. A Deer Snare . . . . .	219
18. A Wooden Ceremonial Pipe . . . . .	225
19. <i>a</i> , Raft for crossing the River; <i>b</i> , A Cottonwood Bark Paddle . . . . .	228
20. An Ammunition Bag and Powder Horn . . . . .	228
21. An Eagle tied to prevent Flapping of Wings . . . . .	230

	PAGE
22. Sketch Map of Bluff where Eagle's Nest was found . . . . .	231
23. <i>a</i> , The Eagle Cage; <i>b</i> , Eagle tied to a Log . . . . .	232
24. Dragging a Travois carrying an Eagle . . . . .	234
25. <i>a</i> , A Prairie Grouse Snare; <i>b</i> , A Dancing Prairie Grouse; <i>c</i> , A Young Prairie-Chicken . . . . .	239



## INTRODUCTION

In this paper Doctor Wilson presents another phase of Hidatsa Indian life, following the same method as in his well-known study of the dog and the horse.<sup>1</sup> The work of Doctor Wilson gives one an intimate view of tribal life among the Village Indians of the Missouri; he not only gives the human touch essential to an insight, but in the completeness of the narrative gives the precise detail necessary to the adequate comparison of culture traits. He has, therefore, rendered a double service by vividly portraying the tribal life of the Upper Missouri and by increasing the data for the analytical student of culture. Though the subject of this paper is limited to eagle trapping and the associated ceremonies, the narratives cross-section a large sector of tribal life for the period just preceding 1885, after which the old village life broke down.

The veneration of eagle feathers and feather heraldry are highly characteristic of Indian tribes of the Mississippi Valley. It is not strange, then, that the taking of eagles should be associated with rituals and attendant beliefs. Concerning these ceremonies, the literature of the area offers no full accounts; rarely is there a more detailed statement than that eagles were trapped in pits and that the procedure was ceremonial. However, the trapping technique has been noted in outline and the wide distribution of the trait suspected. Mooney, discussing the practice among the Cherokee,<sup>2</sup> states that their method is the same as that used by the Seneca and that this, in turn, is the Plains method. The indications are, then, in favor of a wide distribution of the eagle pit and the technique accompanying it. While we have not made an exhaustive search, we find references to this method of trapping among the following tribes: Apache, Arapaho, Arikara, Blackfoot, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Dakota, Gros Ventre, Havasupai, Hidatsa, Hopi, Mandan, Navajo, Nez Percé, Pawnee, and Seneca.

While the foregoing tribes are credited with the pit method, it should be noted that securing eaglets before they leave the nest and rearing them in captivity is reported for the Thompson Indians and also among certain tribes of Southern California. In each case, the birds are released after a time. However, among the Luiseno, Diegueño, and perhaps elsewhere, eagles were sometimes killed according to ritual. It is therefore probable that keeping eagles in captivity was generally diffused over

---

<sup>1</sup>This series, vol. 15, part 2.

<sup>2</sup>Mooney, James "Myths of the Cherokees" (*Nineteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology*, part 1, Washington, 1902), 492.

the United States and southern Canada, but the use of a pit and the accompanying technique for taking adult eagles is less widely distributed.

Turning now to the pit-trap method, the data available do not permit us to say that a ceremony accompanied the use of the pit in each of the tribes listed above, but such was definitely reported for the Blackfoot, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Hidatsa, Hopi, Mandan, Navajo, and Pawnee. In how far these tribal ceremonies are similar, it is difficult to say, because the accounts are rarely complete. The fullest parallel statement is that for the Cheyenne<sup>1</sup> by Grinnell, the ceremonial procedure in this being closely similar to the accompanying Hidatsa account, and the suggestion from the other fragmentary accounts is that all of the Plains tribes mentioned as using a ceremony proceeded in much the same way. For the Southwest one notes an account for the Hopi by Fewkes,<sup>2</sup> but the ceremonial in this case seems to be of a different type. There are, however, certain points of correspondence, suggesting that along with the pit-trapping technique there was some diffusion of ceremonial practices. The data from the Navajo are fragmentary, but suggest close agreement with the Hopi procedure.

To some extent the distribution of eagle trapping can be traced by archaeological data, since pits have been reported by a number of observers: Grinnell, Hrdlicka, Will, and Miss Densmore. The range of these is chiefly west of the Missouri, from the latitude of the Black Hills, north to the mouth of the Yellowstone. Some have been reported for the Cheyenne Reservation in Montana. No doubt, such pits occur elsewhere, but for want of intensive field surveys have not been reported. So what archaeological data we have pertain to the range of the tribes clustering around the habitat of the Village tribes, represented in this study by the Hidatsa, and the large number of such pits reported suggests that the practice began before the period of discovery.

In general, then, while the eagle trapping procedure is known but for a scattering of tribes, their distribution suggests the universality of the custom throughout the Pueblo area, the Plains, and eastward to the Appalachians. Throughout this range, we may anticipate a single type of trapping in a pit, but the ceremonial procedures associated with this technique promise to vary with the culture area. Thus, in the Southwest, the eagle is usually released after plucking, while in the Plains this is

---

<sup>1</sup>Grinnell, George Bird, *The Cheyenne Indians, Their History and Ways of Life*, 2 vols., New Haven, 1923.

<sup>2</sup>Fewkes, J. Walter, "Property Right in Eagles among the Hopi" (*American Anthropologist*, N.S., vol. 2, pp. 690-707, 1900.)



optional, and the ceremonies by the trapper follow the general ritualistic types for their respective areas. Had we fuller data in each area, this trait would offer the opportunity for a study of diffusion in opposition to well established types of ritualistic procedure.<sup>1</sup>

CLARK WISSLER.

---

<sup>1</sup>The drawings accompanying the text were made in the field by the interpreter, Edward Goodbird, supervised by Wolf-chief, the informant. They are presented here as a part of the evidence and to elucidate the text. The references to previous publications were prepared by Miss Bella Weitzner, and to her should be credited the footnotes, unless otherwise designated.

## AN EAGLE HUNT

The Hidatsa were bold and energetic hunters of eagles and eagle plumes were articles of barter. The twelve tail feathers of a young golden eagle were the price of a horse, for among the Hidatsa the wearing of eagle plumes was a mark of social position. The writer recalls how one Black-hawk, an aged Hidatsa, prepared for the camera by placing two fine eagle feathers in his scalplock.

"I wear these feathers to show that I have struck two enemies," said Black-hawk. "Once I should have struck a third enemy, but did not."

"How was that?" I asked.

"I was out on a war party against the Standing Rock Sioux. It was early morning. A man came out of his cabin and we surrounded him. He looked like a half-breed and we did not know whether to take him for an Indian or a white man. 'He wears white man's clothes and lives in a cabin,' said some. We had no wish to kill a white man and have trouble with the Government. Others said, 'No, he is an Indian. He lives in our enemies' tribe and speaks to us in their language.' 'It is true,' I said, 'he is a Sioux. Let me strike him; and I want to see if my new repeating rifle will shoot a bullet through him.'"

It was a blood-thirsty tale and it was difficult to reconcile it with peaceful, kindly, old Black-hawk, who spent his afternoons contentedly swinging his tiny granddaughter in a hammock he had made of two rope pieces and a scrap of blanket.

"Black-hawk," I said, "why did you want to kill anybody? What made you Indians so savage, so eager to take scalps?"

I will try to reproduce his answer in the picturesque Indian-English of my interpreter:—

"We Indians not savage. We not like to kill anybody. You not think we like to go in war party, may be two months, may be year; often not have anything to eat, sleep in rain, no cover over you, may be frost, snow, cold wind on your body! We not like that; we not foolish. But what for you white man work in field? I see white man work hard with plow; sweat run down his face; he get very tired. I think he not like that. But white man turn over ground with plow, sow wheat, get much money, get rich, then he be boss. Then everybody think him big man and he marry anybody he want. We Indians not get rich because we not have money, but we like to be boss. If young man not go in war party, everybody say, 'You bad young man. Why you not defend your



tribe?' Girls not look at him. Nobody invite him to feast. But if he go out in war party, strike many enemies, win honor marks, wear war eagle feathers in hair, then everybody say, 'That good young man.' When he go to feast, everyone make him welcome; if he speak in council, everybody listen; when he go through village, all girls smile on him and he marry anyone he want!"

However, eagle feathers were more than conventional badges of honor, since they were from a bird playing an important role in Hidatsa belief. This is clearly shown in the narratives recorded in these pages. As in his earlier accounts, the author strives to record in the concrete the arts and customs of the tribe before the breaking up of their aboriginal village life about 1885 and to this end presents the narrative of his informants with as little change as possible.

The following narrative is by Wolf-chief, an Hidatsa, born about 1849, interpreted by Edward Goodbird, his nephew, and recorded in 1915.

*The Initiation and Preparation for the Hunt.* I was, I think, twenty-four years of age when I visited Crow-flies-high's band, living near the mouth of the Yellowstone, where I lodged with a friend named Two-bulls. The first green corn of the autumn harvest was being boiled, so I think it must have been early in August<sup>1</sup> (p. 142). Crow-flies-high was a chief who had quarrelled in our winter camp when I was sixteen years old and forsook the tribe, taking with him about thirty lodges. His band lived near the mouth of the Yellowstone River. They had, I think, seven log cabins and about twenty-three earthlodges.

Looking up in the sky one day Two-bulls said to me: "I wish someone would hunt eagles. I should like to join him." "Why cannot we go ourselves?" I asked. "I know how to make the pits. I can catch eagles."

Other young men of the camp heard of our plans. "I want to go with you in this hunt," said Wolf. Two-bulls and I laughed. "Yes, we are going," we said. Fast-dog came to us. "Boys, I want to join you, too," he said. Fire-above also asked leave to go and his brother, White-back, joined us, making a party of six. Wolf was a young man about my own age, Two-bulls was twenty-six years old. Fire-above had no voice and spoke in whispers.

---

<sup>1</sup>Though our information is scant, there appear to be some tribal differences as to the time of the year when eagles were taken. The Cheyenne, according to Grinnell, hunted eagles in the spring and again in the fall (Grinnell, vol. 1, 299). Mooney, on the other hand, states that the Cherokee captured eagles in the winter or late fall (Mooney, 492-493).

We thought eagles were sacred; because of their mystery power, hunting them was dangerous. But we were rather reckless young men, and not very reverent toward sacred things.

We prepared to start, carrying all our baggage on our backs. Instead of robes, we wore soldiers' all-wool blankets. I took three pairs of moccasins, some sinew thread, a piece of tent skin for patching moccasins, some dried meat pounded fine, as for pemmican, and some parched corn. I carried a .44 Winchester rifle and a hundred and fifty cartridges.

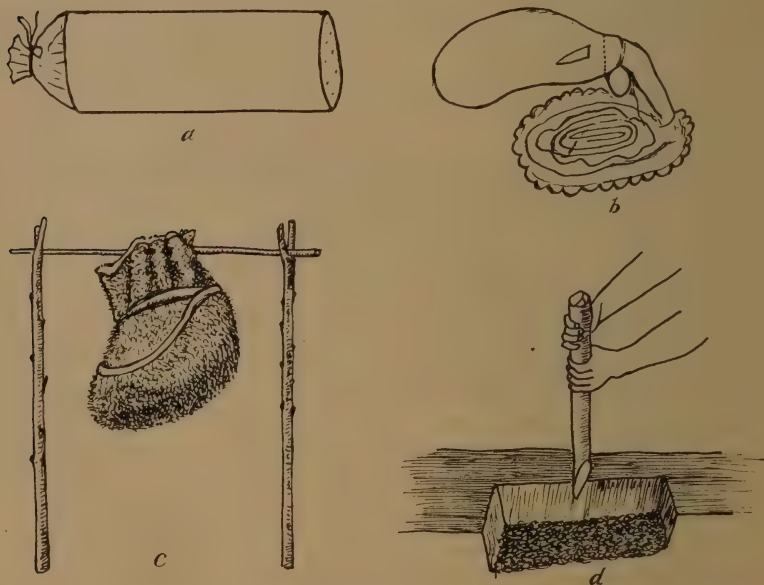


Fig. 1. *a*, Cylindrical Rawhide Bag; *b*, Paunch, the Broken Line showing where It was cut for making a Bucket; *c*, A Paunch Bucket; *d*, Sketch showing the Manner of using a Digging-Stick.

My moccasins, sinew, and piece of tent skin, I had packed in a cylindrical rawhide bag (Fig. 1a) which I bore on my back using a rawhide rope for a carrying strap. My pounded dry meat, or pemmican, was packed in a heart skin bag and my parched corn, of the soft white variety, in another heart skin. Both heart skins were packed in the rawhide bag.

I had two blankets; one I folded across my shoulders to rest my pack on; the other I drew about me, binding it around my body with my



cartridge belt. Besides the shells in my belt, I had two boxes of cartridges in my pack.

We started up the Missouri. Knowing we would need bait for catching the eagles, we began to look for some. One of the party killed a jack rabbit and skinned it at once; but White-back took the skin from the one who killed the rabbit. When two friends are hunting, it is customary to give the skin to the one who did not do the killing. If, when I shot an animal, I should take the skin for myself I should be called a bad man. The jackrabbit was to be made into eagle bait.

There was a long strip of flat land along the Missouri between the river and the hills. We traveled about seventy miles up the river on this flat plain, and on the fourth day came to a place called Mouth-of-bark-creek place, where a long hill, or bluff, faced the west. This bluff, or range of abrupt hills, extended about thirteen miles and skirted a creek called Bark Creek. The surrounding country was prairie land, like our Reservation, but the hills were quite high. There was much grass and tall timber on this side, but on the farther side of the creek, toward the mountains, there were not many trees, the grass was poor, and there were many weeds. Under this range of hills, in the timber along the creek, we found a cottonwood tree leaning far over, almost to the ground. The trunk was about two feet in diameter.

"This is a good place to build a lodge," we said. We began to collect long poles to lean against the tree to make the lodge, when Fast-dog exclaimed: "There are many tracks around here; I will see if I can kill something for food."

Fast-dog had a percussion rifle with the barrel cut off short. Soon we heard the report of his gun, and then, "*Hwu-u-u-u-u!*" and we knew he had killed some game. We all ran in the direction of the sound, for the first to arrive would get the hide and be called the "alert one" of the company. Fast-dog had shot a black-tailed deer; I thought it would make very good bait for the eagles and I cut out the breast of the deer for my share. The deer was very fat. The fat lay in such layers that we could not eat it all that night. I also took out the paunch whole, for a bucket, cutting off the pointed part, and turning the latter wrong side out.

"Let us make this deer hide into a water bucket also," I said. But Five-above cried, "No, I want to tan that hide and make a robe of it; for I have only one blanket and when cold weather sets in I shall need the skin to cover myself."

We took the deer meat back to camp, ate our supper of fresh venison, and resumed preparations to build our hunting lodge. But one of the

party suggested that we postpone the building until we had dug the eagle pits. "There will be an unfavorable wind, one of these days," he said. "We can build our lodge on such a day when we cannot hunt eagles."

*The First Camp.* We agreed to this, as it seemed wise. In a small open place in the timber near by, we found a growth of heavy grass. We camped here for the night, sleeping on the heavy grass but not attempting to make beds. We slept in a row, with our heads all lying in the same direction. Each slept with his gun under his head, with a bit of his blanket drawn over the gun to serve for a pillow. I had two blankets; I folded one of these lengthwise and spread it on the grass with one end drawn up over the gun, thus serving me for a pillow. I lay down in the other blanket, folding it once over me. I wore my belt, but under the blanket, not bound over it as on the day before; I drew this second blanket up around my neck, but not over my head, for I wanted my ears to be uncovered in case an enemy came in the dark. My gun lay with the barrel pointed to the left as I lay on my back. If I were aroused in the night, I could seize the barrel of the gun as I sprang up. I slept with my clothes on.

We lay in a row, but about a yard apart. We were careful not to lie too close together, for if we were awakened in the night by enemies, someone might seize his friend's gun and cause confusion.

Before we lay down to sleep, Two-bulls filled his pipe and we all smoked and talked. He had to fill his pipe many times. Two-bulls was a great smoker; but I did not smoke much when I was young.

The eagle hunt is sacred and should be conducted with a leader and proper ceremonies. We knew how to make the eagle pits, but we were without a leader. We all agreed that we should work together, helping each other make his pit.

We had but one hoe which Wolf had brought. "We must make digging-sticks," we said, "and tomorrow we must lay our plans and select the places for our pits." We lay down to sleep about eleven o'clock.

Our campfire, made with matches we had obtained at Fort Buford, had been extinguished as soon as we had finished our supper; we were careful to bury the coals with earth. We broiled our venison over the coals on a kind of wooden fork. We had cut a three-pronged sapling on which we laid the meat to hold it over the fire. We liked meat broiled over the coals and held in the smoke, for it always tasted sweeter.

*The Paunch Bucket.* We fetched water in the paunch (Fig. 1c) taken from the black-tailed deer. Our camp was on a high bank, but



we cut steps in it with our hoe so that we could get down to the river for water. The paunch water bucket<sup>1</sup> is shown in Fig. 1c; Fig. 1b shows the paunch and at the place where it was cut is shown a bit of flesh always found at this spot. The bucket (Fig. 1c) was made of the paunch turned wrong side out. There were little cells, or hairs, as we called them, over the inside of the paunch, except where the white bands are marked in the drawing; these bands are hairless, and here the walls of the paunch are thicker than elsewhere. The paunch bucket was carried by the ends of a stick about forty inches long, and three-fourths of an inch in thickness thrust through the top. The water bucket was borne on the shoulders; a thong could be passed under the ends of the stick and the bucket packed on the back, using the thong as a carrying strap.

Two forked saplings were cut and thrust in the ground outside of the lodge when the latter was built, in the shade of a big cottonwood tree. Each of these saplings was of the height that would permit one of us, kneeling down, to drink from the mouth of the bucket. The paunch bucket was about twenty inches long and nearly eighteen inches wide; from these measurements it may be calculated how much water the bucket held. The stick or skewer used as handle was of June berry wood, and not easily broken; other kinds of wood are apt to get soft when they get wet. The forks in which the June berry handle rested (Fig. 1c) were about forty inches from the ground. As we had no axes or hatchets, we used knives for cutting the sapling posts, and for other work of this kind.

The two posts or forked saplings, were thus planted in the ground: a heavy stick, a foot and a half long was sharpened at one end and driven into the ground with a thick branch used as a maul. The stick was then pulled up and the forked post planted in its place and given a tap or two to make it stand firmly.

Through the night I heard the "*wu-u-u-u*" of the wolves and owls hooted in the trees overhead. Wolves on a quiet evening can be heard some distance. When I came to Independence there were wolves in the surrounding country and at night I could hear them howling in the hills four miles away. Our camp in the timber was on a bank about fifteen feet above the water.

*The Pits.* Before sunrise the next morning, someone had risen and started a fire and we heard him calling, "Get up." We arose and broiled venison on the wooden fork as we had done the evening before. One of the party passed around parched corn which we ate with raw fat; it

---

<sup>1</sup>Utilization of a buffalo paunch to carry water for dogs has been previously described for the Hidatsa, this series, vol. 15, 225.

tasted good. The meat of the deer killed the day before was lying on the ground covered with the hide. When we had eaten we took the hoe and our knives and the digging-sticks we had made the night before, and set out to make the pits.<sup>1</sup>

We had three of these digging-sticks of green ash, each about as long as a man's forearm and as thick as one's wrist. The stick was shaved to a point (Fig. 1d) which was covered with fat and held over the coals to harden it. If the point got dull or worn, it was rubbed on a boulder to sharpen it again.

We went to the top of the long bluff which faced the west. We paused at the top and asked, "Which side is the west? What are the directions?" We laughed and joked and settled on the location of our pits and decided what were the points of the compass.

Two-bulls was the first to select the site for his pit. "I like this place here," he said.

"We must make the pit long enough so that a man may lie extended and rest, and thus not grow weary," I said.

We all set to making Two-bulls' pit. We measured off a rectangular place on the ground equal in length to Two-bulls' height so that he could lie down without touching his head and feet to the walls. The pit was about thirty inches wide. We had seen eagle pits before and knew they should be placed with the head to the south. To measure the length of the pit, we had made Two-bulls lie down on the ground.

We began to dig with our digging-sticks (Fig. 1d). We had spread a blanket on the ground, on which we threw the cast-out earth, scooping it up with our hands. When the blanket was full, we carried it to the brow of the bluff and cast it down the side. Fire-above worked with the hoe while the others used the digging-sticks, taking turns now and then while one or two rested; but the latter then carried off the earth. When we thought the pit deep enough, Two-bulls sat in it; but as his head showed a little above the ground, we dug the pit deeper. Two-bulls' pit was completed about noon; it lay about three-fourths of a mile from our camp.

<sup>1</sup>Matthews, Washington ("Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians" *Miscellaneous Publication No. 7, United States Geological and Geographical Survey*, Washington, 1877) gives the name of the pit as *amasi*, adding that if the locality where the trapping occurred is not already provided with a name "they call it the *amasi*" of whoever was master of the ceremonies during the season" (58-9).

According to Miss Densmore, the Hidatsa name for eagle catching was *a'masi miréti*, meaning, cache going into (Densmore, Frances, "Mandan and Hidatsa Music" *Bulletin 80, Bureau of American Ethnology*, Washington, 1923), 63.

Apparently the Gros Ventre also hunted eagles, for Kroeber (this series, vol. 1, 149) describes a unique variation of the pit method. He writes: "When a camp was broken, small brush tents with windows of grass were built. Fat and meat were strewn about the place and a man entered the ambush before daylight. He could look and shoot through the grass, but he could not be seen inside. Birds as large as eagles were secured in this way."



We moved at once to Wolf's site on the same bluff; for as we had brought no food, we ate no noon meal. We dug Wolf's eagle pit as we had dug Two-bulls'. When this pit was completed, we moved on to dig one for Fire-above. But when we had dug Fire-above's pit the sun was low, our arms were sore with digging, and we were weary. We were glad to return to camp.

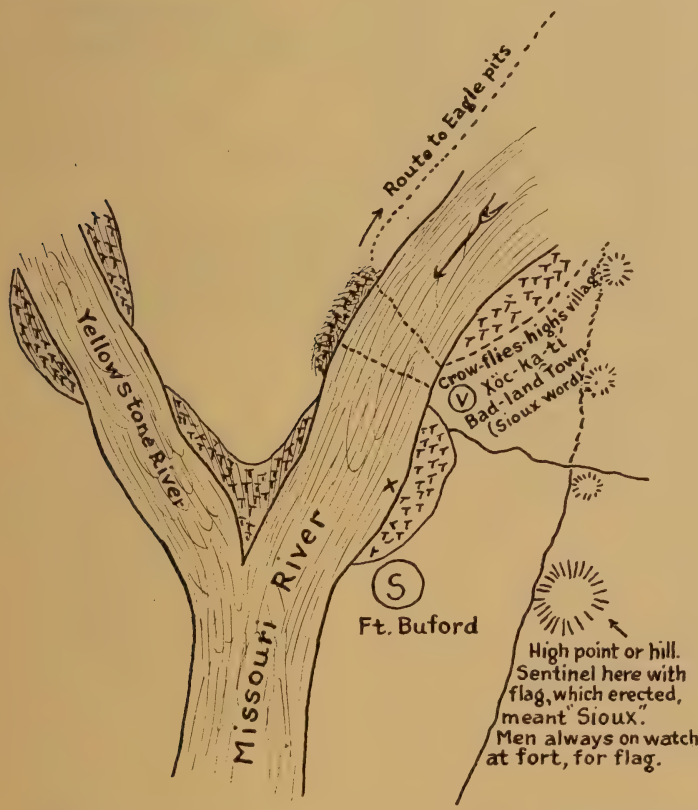


Fig. 2. Map showing the Location of Crow-flies-high's Village.

Wolf's pit was about two and a half miles from our camp. We had dug our pits at about three-quarters of a mile from each other.

In camp we ate a hearty evening meal, for we were very hungry. We had no coffee nor sugar, but we did not care. After supper we talked of the three pits yet to be dug. "I want to dig mine at the foot of a high hill toward the south," I said, for I had heard that a pit so placed gave

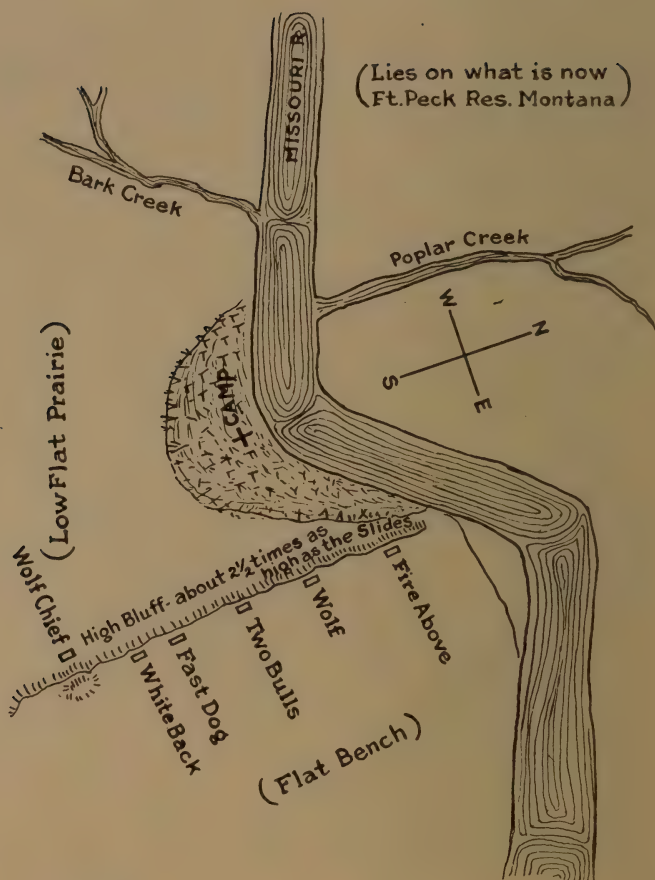


Fig. 3. Map of Eagle Hunting Camp and Vicinity.



Fig. 4. Vertical Section, East and West, of Map of Eagle Hunting Camp shown in Fig. 3.

good hunting and many young eagles would be caught. Besides my own pit, the two brothers Fast-dog and White-back had yet to dig theirs.

The next morning some of the boys prepared their bait of rabbit-skins, or skins of other animals; mine was the breast of the deer we had killed. I had covered it with dry grass to keep it from spoiling. This morning we had waked to find a good wind blowing from the west.

"Let me get into my pit," said Two-bulls, "it will take but a short time to make the frame of the cover." "No," I answered, "you cannot take it easy like that; you must help dig the rest of the pits for we helped you."

So we all went out to dig my pit first, with digging-sticks, knives, and hoe. The point I had chosen for my pit was a little way under the bluff.

Fig. 2 is a map showing the location of the village of Crow-flies-high at the junction of the Yellowstone and the Missouri. The map does not lie exactly north and south, but the arrow shows the direction of the river's current. Crow-flies-high's village was called *Xó'ckati* or Bad-land village, a Sioux word. It stood on the right bank of a little creek between two stretches of timber that skirted the left bank of the Missouri. On the right is a series of foothills and from the high ground above rises a large hill where a sentinel used to be stationed to watch for hostile Indians, especially in time of the Sioux wars. If he saw anything suspicious he waved a flag, which could be seen from the fort.

Fig. 3 is a map of our camp which was in a growth of timber on the right bank of the Missouri, a little below the mouth of Bark Creek. Just below the timber, facing west, a high bluff rises about two and a half times as high as the Slides which are on the left bank of the Missouri, opposite Independence hill. It will be seen that the bluff faces the west. The eagle pits of the members of our party were placed on the top of the bluff not far from the edge. They were arranged so that the hunter lay with his head to the south when he was in the pit.

It will be seen by referring to the map (Fig. 3) that my eagle pit was not on the top of the bluff, but was on the prairie beneath. Just above on the very edge at the top of the bluff rose a high, sharp-pointed hill. I had heard that one of the best sites to choose for an eagle pit was at the foot of such a "pointed hill"; but not too close to the foot of the hill. In Fig. 4 will be seen an east and west section of the map in Fig. 3.

Now in the fall eagles flew down the Missouri, from the west or northwest. An eagle usually flew a straight course over flat ground, as it made its way from height to height, and when it came to an elevation like



the hill C (Fig. 4), it slowly circled around looking downward for its prey. Sometimes it would alight and sit on the top of the hill.

I did not place my pit just at the bottom of the hill at A (Fig. 4), because my father and others had told me that the eagle would then find it difficult to take the bait. It would circle the hill C, but would have to descend to A at such a steep declivity and at such high speed that the skin of the bait would be torn loose; but my pit at B, a quarter of a mile away, gave the eagle plenty of room to come down gently. At A the eagle might not be able even to strike the bait. When an eagle for any reason could not or would not seize the bait gently, we said that it "fought the bait."

I explained to the others of our party, "I want to dig my pit farther west than you have done, at the bottom of that hill and not on the top of the bluff, but not too close to the foot of the hill, lest the eagles try to make off with my bait or fight it."

We never placed a pit on the top of a hill; but we did locate them on the top of a flat bluff, as the other five members of our party had done.

The hill C (Fig. 4) was quite large and high. I knew an eagle coming from the west would circle about it just above its top, or halfway down sometimes. Over the flat prairie and above the small hills, an eagle always flew down the river without resting; but on coming to a height it would pause and circle about it. An eagle coming from the west and passing over my bait would spy it at once but would not pause then; the bird would fly on to the hill and turn on its course. An eagle always turned thus and stooped to the bait against the wind. We hunted eagles on days the wind was from the west, knowing they would turn and strike the bait flying against the wind.

At the pits on the bluff, as placed by the other members of our party, an eagle's actions were somewhat different. Seeing the bait, an eagle would sometimes make one circle and, facing the west, would stoop feet forward and sit on the bait. More often, it would circle once or twice, and come down feet forward, but before striking the bait would swoop upward again. This was repeated several times, sometimes indeed for half an hour before it sat on the bait. An eagle always stooped facing the west, or against the wind. We never stayed in the pit unless the wind was from the west.

Eagle pits had to be carefully placed or no eagles would be taken. Two-bull's pit was placed only two paces from the edge of the bluff; and when an eagle stooped at his pit it tore his bait, and flew up in the air again. When he returned to his tribe, Two-bulls asked an old man why

that was. "Because," he answered, "you placed your pit too close to the edge of the bluff. It should have been four or five paces from the edge."

I do not fully understand why placing the pit further away should make such a difference, but I know it did.

My brother, Red-kettle, had much knowledge of eagle pits because he studied them. Once he and I found an old eagle pit, but he said: "This pit is not placed well; it is too near the edge of this bluff." We stepped back five yards, dug a new pit, and caught five eagles, proving that Red-kettle knew his craft.

*Elks.* We dug the last three pits on the second day, finishing in the evening. We had had no dinner, but we did stop to smoke and drink water at a spring. There was a good west wind that day and we saw many eagles flying over head. After supper, we turned in. We could hear the coyotes and wolves howling, and owls hooting in the trees, and in the timber across the river we heard buck elks bellowing, *A<sup>n</sup>h-h<sub>a</sub>-a-a-a<sup>n</sup>h-a-h<sub>a</sub><sup>n</sup>h-a-ha<sup>n</sup>h!* A buck deer grunts much like a pig, *Hu<sup>n</sup>k*, *hu<sup>n</sup>k hu<sup>n</sup>k hu<sup>n</sup>k*, thus calling the does. He does this in the daytime, running, running, running around everywhere; but he also calls thus at night. The elks bellowed, or lowed, very early in the morning and again in the evening after three o'clock. I never heard an elk bellow in midday, but I think his call might be heard at any hour of the night. The elks were bellowing before I went to sleep, and when I woke in the night, and in the morning they were still bellowing. The breeding season for old elks began early in August. Young ones began breeding about the first of September. By October, breeding was over, and the bucks stayed away from the does. The bellowing of the elks sounded close to our camp. In the morning I thought to myself, "Our meat is nearly gone. I will try to kill an elk."

I took my gun and started for the river. It was quite dark yet. I went very slowly, but saw nothing until I came to the river; on the other side, on a sandbar at the edge of the river, I saw a herd of elk. There were two bucks in the herd. They would go down to the water as if to swim across; but would turn back and mount the sandbar again. The bank on the hither side of the river was rather high. I thought to myself, "Those elks will try to cross. The bank here is steep, so that they cannot climb it quickly and I can kill several."

I ran to camp and told Two-bulls, a better hunter than I, what I had seen. It was fairly light now, and we two returned to the river.

A little farther upstream, the bank descended almost to the water's edge. The elks seemed to be aware of this, for they moved up the river

about three hundred yards and plunged in, the two bucks entering the water last. There were about thirty in the herd. The current, of course, carried them downstream.

At the low place in the bank was a sand bank, and a short distance inland were some cottonwood trees. Two-bulls and I hid in these and awaited the herd. We did not kneel, as white men do, but sat with our heels flat on the ground. The elks approached, swimming rapidly but quietly, not snorting as horses do, but constantly turning their heads from side to side. They steered for the sand bank. The first two that landed stood in shallow water, about two feet deep, and half turning, looked back at the rest of the swimming herd.

"I will take the one on the right, you the one on the left," I said to Two-bulls; we both fired. The two elks turned to re-cross the river, but both fell in the shallow water by the sand bank. They were both does. The rest of the herd turned and swam away from us, the two bucks leading, their white horns shining in the early light. We fired, and two more elks were hit. One floated downstream and was lost; the other reached the opposite bank, where it staggered and fell.

Two-bulls and I doffed shirts and leggings and wading out to them pushed the two dead does out into the current, our object being to float the carcasses down to our camp. We ran along the edge of the higher bank, keeping abreast of the floating carcasses. The other members of our party, hearing the shooting, came running from camp and met us in the path that had been cut down to our watering place. We called to them, "There are two dead elks out in the current!" The four boys threw off their shirts and leggings, and swimming out to the carcasses, dragged them up to the bank which was quite steep here. We anchored them each in shallow water, by a thong tied to the legs of the animal and fastened to a stake driven into the mud. "Let us butcher the nearer elk first," we said.

We wore our shirts, but left off our moccasins and leggings as we stood in the water. We opened the carcass and a great deal of blood ran down.

*Catfish.* Soon we saw many catfish coming up around us, to get the entrails of the dead elk. We could see the horns or spines on the upper part of their bodies. "I will catch some of these fish," said Fire-above. "How will you take them?" we asked. "I will show you, but first I must return to camp for a line," he answered.

He soon returned with an awl made of a three cornered file; he untwisted his belt, made of a kind of twine, to make his line. On his



left arm, he wore two brass wires for bracelets. He removed one of these bracelets and sharpened it with the file and bent it into a hook, which he baited with a bit of meat from the elk's paunch. He held one end of the line in his hand and fastened the other to the hook which he dropped in the water. It was seized immediately. Fire-above drew the fish out and dropped his hook for another catfish; he continued until he had taken some forty fish. At last one of the party said, "Don't catch any more of those fish; we won't eat them any how." Fire-above stopped fishing.

We cut up the elk's carcass and threw the backbone into the river crying, "Fish, we give you this as an offering."

Having taken all the meat from the first carcass, we said, "We cannot use more meat. Let us give the other carcass as an offering to the fish also." So we untied the thong that anchored it and pushed the second carcass out into the river.

Fire-above had thrown the catfish he had caught, in a pile on the bank. We let them lie and die. They made a sound like *kr-r-r-r*, when they tried to breathe, whether with the mouth, or in some other way, I do not know. Catfish often make this sound when caught. We did not eat any of the fish.

It was now near noon and we had had no morning meal; but as we butchered the elk we had eaten the liver and kidneys raw. We carried the meat up to camp, ate our dinner, and after covering our pile of meat with the skin of the dead elk, we went to get some small trees to make frames for the covers of our eagle pits.

*The Cover Frame.* We now went to our pits, coming to that of Two-bulls first. "I never made a cover frame," he said, "but I have seen one uncovered. It was made with three long poles that lay lengthwise of the pit." "And I never made one," said Fire-above, "but I have seen one being made."

Fire-above measured off three poles a little longer than the length of the pit. I think the pit was thirty or thirty-two inches wide.

"The poles of the cover frame," said Fire-above, "may be of any kind of wood, and should be about an inch in diameter. They should be covered with branches of buckbrush, tied down with a binding of blue<sup>1</sup> grass."

Fig. 5a shows the finished frame of Two-bulls' pit, the three long poles, and at intervals on the central pole are bunches of buckbrush laid,

---

<sup>1</sup>Bluish slough grass is used also for making twine, for stringing squash, for lining cache pits, and for a matting under the earth covering of a hunting lodge.—G. L. W.

butt to butt, and bound with a single binding. The bunches of buckbrush, falling to left and right, were well bound to the other two poles, respectively (Fig. 5a). The tie or binding is made of three rounds of blue grass. Branchlets of the buckbrush hanging down inconveniently into the pit

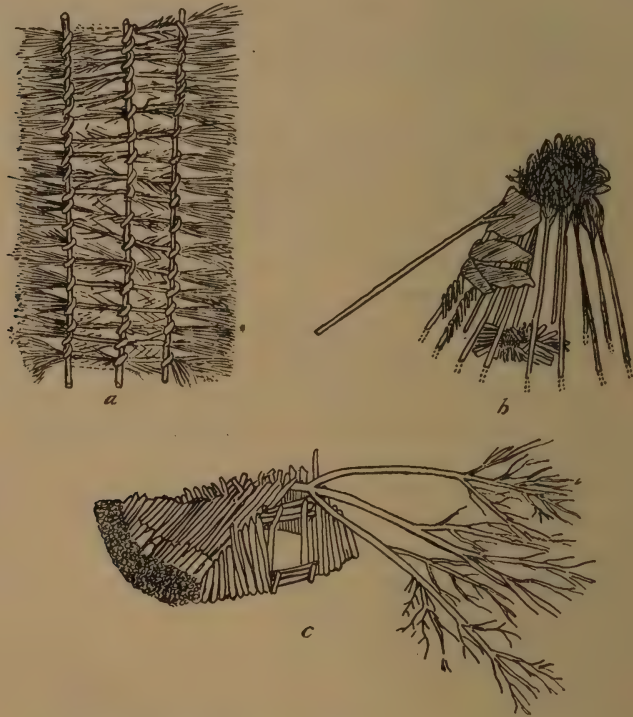


Fig. 5. *a*, Completed Frame for Eagle Pit Cover; *b*, Construction of Framework on which Meat was hung for Roasting; *c*, Goodbird's Sketch of a Model of the Framework of the Hunting Lodge.

were broken off that they might not interfere with the movements of the hunter. We made the cover frames of the other pits in the same way.

We made the frame a short distance from the pit, measuring off on the ground the exact size of the pit, so that the frame would have the proper proportions.

When we wished to lay the cover frame over the pit, we cut three little narrow trenches at either end, in which to lay the ends of the three poles, so that the frame would lie even with the ground. When the

cover frame was laid in place over the pit we plucked a little dry grass and scattered it over the frame.

The hunter lying in the pit could look upward through the loose grass and see everything above him perfectly. He could see the eagles flying over head, or any eagle that alighted on the bait. To enter the pit, the hunter lifted the frame at one end; if the grass had been blown off, he shook more over the frame again.

We made the frames of four pits that day and laid them in place.

We young boys were a little reckless, and not knowing all the proper eagle-hunting ceremonies, did not do everything in the accepted way. Afterwards when we arrived at home, we found we had not made the cover frames of our pits in quite the prescribed way, and that an eagle pit should be entered only at one particular place. In this hunt we entered our pits wherever it seemed convenient. We Hidatsa were particular about things pertaining to the gods, but young men were apt to be a little irreverent.

We returned to camp before sunset and ate our supper. White-back's pit and mine were the only ones that now lacked cover frames.

*The Skin Boiling Kettle.* In the morning Fire-above said, "Some of you boys wanted to make a skin boiling kettle of the skin of the deer Fast-dog killed. You may make it from the skin of this elkhide." After our supper, Fire-above again said, "Let us now make that skin kettle. I told you I wanted that deerskin for a robe; but now that we have an elkskin, let us make a kettle so that we can make bone grease and boil meat and drink broth."

"Good," I said, "I can make the kettle. You and Two-bulls bring me some stones the size of my fist. Go to the hills yonder and bring them back in a blanket." Two-bulls laughed, "I do not believe you can make the kettle, but we shall see. I will go."

"Fast-dog and White-back," I said, "gather some dry wood." This they did. "Wolf," I said, "get your hoe and dig a hole here about thus big." And I held up my bent arms joined at the hands by interlacing the fingers. "Dig the hole as deep as your forearm up to your elbow." Wolf laughed. "I don't believe you can make a kettle either," he said.

I laid off a circle on the ground as large as I had just indicated and, with my butcher knife, helped Wolf dig the hole. I had bidden Fast-dog and White-back fetch some dry wood which they now brought in. "Make a fire, as for a sweatbath," I said. While they were making it, Fire-above and Two-bulls returned with the stones. "Excellent!" I



said, "If you bring stones enough, we can cook the whole elk. Bring me some more water." They filled the paunch bucket at the river. "Now, Wolf," I called, "bring me the elkhide." The head, legs, and neck had been cut off, so that it was now roughly circular.

The hole was now dug. We sharpened some sticks for pegs and I laid the hide, hair side down, in the hole. "Now you will see if I can make a kettle," I said; "get your knife, somebody, and cut holes in the edge of this hide so that I may drive these pegs through them." I pushed the center of the hide down into the bottom of the hole with my hands. We pegged the sides of the hide to the ground around the edge and I poured some water into the cavity. "Fetch more water," I called. While it was being brought I cried to Wolf, "Take the best of that meat from the elk and cut it into strips." He did so, piling it on the grass.

I now cut two forked green sticks, using them as tongs. Fire-above and Two-bulls filled the skin kettle half full of red hot stones. The water in the kettle began to boil. "Put in the meat," I cried to Wolf. He did so. The water still boiled from the hot stones. When cooked, with a sharp stick Wolf lifted out the pieces of meat and laid them on the grass. As the water cooled I said, "Put in more hot stones." Wolf obeyed. We thus cooked all the meat we needed.

"We will leave our skin kettle here in its hole," I said; and to Fire-above, "If you want bone grease, break up your elk bones and boil them."<sup>1</sup>

The members of our party were astonished at my making the skin kettle. But I had once been with a war party in which was a visiting Crow Indian, Go-forward-against-them. We got out of water, and the Crow melted snow in a skin kettle he made.<sup>2</sup>

Our kettle, laid in the hole and pegged in place, lasted us all the time we hunted eagles, or about twenty days. Even at the end of this time, it had shrunk very little. While we more usually broiled our meat in our camp, if we wanted broth we boiled the meat in our skin kettle.

*Ceremonial Weeping.* In the evening, a little after sunset, we went a short distance from camp and cried and wept, so that we might catch eagles. We cried thus twice a day, before sunrise and after sunset, as long as we were in camp.

*Finishing the Eagle Pits.* We lay down for the night but before we slept talked of what fine pit covers we had made. "Tomorrow we will

<sup>1</sup>Breaking bones for grease and marrow appears to have been a common Hidatsa procedure, this series, vol. 15, 174, 301-302.

<sup>2</sup>In a previous narrative (this series, vol. 15, 225) Wolf-chief describes melting snow in a skin kettle with, however, no implication that it is a Crow custom.

finish the others," we said. The next morning we finished my pit and White-back's.

"I have seen eagle pits before," Fire-above said, when we were discussing how the bait should be placed. "Two wooden pins were driven into the ground near the pit's edge; they were like hooks and were cut from a forked sapling, one of the prongs being left longer than the other to permit its being driven in the ground. A third pin, a straight one, was driven into the wall, inside the pit. The bait was fastened to the two wooden pins that were outside. The thongs that bound the bait down passed under the two hooked pins and were anchored to the straight pin inside."

The two forked pins are called *mádu-íkate* (bait pin); the straight pin is called *mádu-iduti* (bait binder). Fig. 6a shows the under side of the rabbit that was used for bait. A wooden spit is skewered through the rabbit's skin and the two thongs are noosed one over each end of the spit, then drawn down under the forked pins and anchored to the straight pin fastened in the pit wall.

In Fig. 6c, is also shown a piece of red lung (in this case of elk or deer) that was bound to the upper side of the rabbit, so that an eagle looking down from above would think the rabbit lay with its side torn open—as if another eagle had been devouring it. On the rabbit's nose is a little blood to show that it is freshly killed. A stuffed rabbitskin was often used as bait instead. The piece of fresh lung was bound to the rabbit by cords as shown in Fig. 6c. It will also be noticed that the hunter has a thong thrust under his belt. This was to be used to tie the eagle's legs when caught.

In an eagle hunter's pit should be a sacred snare, a bunch of sage, and a stone. These are not represented in the drawing because we did not use them in this hunt. We did not know how to observe all the eagle hunt ceremonies and did not try to do so.

*Drying the Meat.* We finished all the pit covers and an hour or two before noon had returned to camp where we cooked food and ate. After our meal we said, "Let us now dry our meat. We have some hunters, friends of ours, who are coming here to meet us, and we must have meat to give them."

We made a drying stage and on it hung the meat; but first we half roasted some of it over a fire.<sup>1</sup> Small poles, about five feet high and an inch or an inch and a half in diameter, were set in the ground in the form

---

<sup>1</sup>For additional accounts of meat roasting while on a hunt, see this series, vol. 15, 235-236, 268.

of a tipi and tied at the top. These poles were sharpened at the lower ends and thrust into the ground if the latter were soft; if not, a short stick was driven into the ground, drawn out again, and the poles thrust into the holes thus made. The poles were rather rough; some were green, some dry. The heavier poles made the frame and supported lighter poles laid against them. The leaves and forks and branchlets at the tops of the poles were left on or were used for the binding, neither bark nor thong being used. The poles were set about six inches apart on the ground; the diameter of the floor was about equal to the height of the framework. Our meat was laid on the frame and a slow fire of dried cottonwood sticks kindled beneath. When sufficiently roasted on one side, the meat was turned, but the roasting process was never carried too far. Drying was completed by hanging the half roasted meat on a drying scaffold. It was packed away like other dried meat.

Meat thus roasted and dried was to my taste the sweetest of all dried meat. This method of preparation was most convenient for a war or hunting party, forced to move from place to place, often at sudden notice. We often lacked time to dry it thoroughly in the sun and then the meat spoiled.

Fig. 5b shows the construction of the roasting booth. On the left are the pieces of meat; some of them are large slices, one of which is held in place by a prop. Smaller strips of meat are a little lower down. Against them sticks were leaned which prevented them from sliding down, as they were apt to do as they dried. We never covered the booth with meat quite to the top, as a vent was needed for the thick smoke. In the illustration the booth is shown open on the right, to illustrate its construction. An hour was about long enough to roast both sides of one of the bigger slices. It was then taken down and another put in its place. For complete drying, it still required about three more days on the drying scaffold; unroasted meat required four or five days.

When dry the meat was tied with thongs into packages about two feet long and a foot thick. Such a package could be packed on a warrior's back. Meat thus roasted needed no further preparation for eating. One just bit off a piece when he was hungry. We did not pound the meat into pemmican when out with a war party, probably because we had to keep moving and had little time to spare. If a war party were hungry, it rested; and one of the party opened his pack of dried meat and distributed it to the rest. At their next stop, another distributed from his pack.

Preparing meat by roasting and drying was called *mái-ádakuhě*.



*Ceremonial Weeping by the Hunters.* We ate our supper about sunset. We had no regular meal hours but ate whenever we were hungry, or when it was convenient; nor had we a regular noon meal; we ate at noon when we were in camp but if we were out hunting we often went without food all day.

After sunset, we sat eating marrow with roasted meat. We broke marrow bones with stones, or with the heavy head of our iron hoe. We struck the bone in several places seeking to crack it lengthwise. The bones were not first roasted. The marrow was eaten raw and was dug out with a small stick or a knife. As we ate we said, "If there is a good wind tomorrow, we will rise early and hunt eagles. If the wind is unfavorable we will build our hunting lodge, for Sioux may come and attack us and we may need the lodge for protection." A hunting lodge was built strongly and served as a kind of fort.

Our supper ended, we went out for two or two and a half hours and cried and wept to the gods, not vehemently, but as if we were wailing. We said something like this:

"O gods, I am poor; I know that men who are poor will always be unfortunate; be kind to me; put something good before me; make it easy to get what I want; I want to find something easy to get."

When I prayed in this fashion, I thought of myself as addressing all the gods in the world: the trees, grass, earth, and everything that moves. Sometimes we looked up at the stars and asked them to help us get what we wanted. As we cried, our tears dropped on the ground. Afterwards if it happened that we fought the Sioux and were in danger, we prayed to the earth, "O earth, my tears have often dropped down on the ground. Remember them now and help me all you can."

If one were praying to the stars he looked upward and wept and prayed; but if he had the right to a sacred ceremony and owned a sacred object, a skull or some other object, he held his hand out palm down, as he prayed. Of course, we did not have any valuable sacred objects with us in the camp.

When I returned from wailing and crying, I thought of the sacredness of eagle hunting and how my father was a great medicineman. I knew how rigid was the Hidatsa observance of the sacred mystery of the eagle hunt. I thought to myself, "I want to make an offering to those birds." I told the others of our party what I was thinking. "Good!" they cried. And they laughed.

I stood up, before the fireplace, faced the west, and cried, "Young eagles, come back this way next summer. I will give you offerings. I

want you to come to this place so that I may catch you. I will offer you a blanket, tobacco, and a feast."

That night as I went to bed I thought of what I had been saying. I knew my father was a great eagle-catching leader. I vowed that I would give good offerings to the eagles when I returned to the village. That night I dreamed that I heard someone in the sky sing a song:—

"Ákuka	maxupaa'c	kits."
Above	gods	came

That is, "The gods above have come." I thought this must mean the eagles. I awoke about midnight and found my face in a sweat. "This," I thought, "may be interpreted in two ways; either I have reason to feel fear, or I am going to catch some eagles."

When I awoke the next morning, I could hear the wind blowing, "hww-u-u-u+", but being in the timber I could not tell in what direction it blew. Two-bulls awoke and called out, "There is a wind blowing. I will go down to the river and see from what direction it is blowing." In a little while he returned. "I am not sure, but I think the wind is from the west," he said. "Good," I cried, "we may hope for eagles."

*Preparing the Bait.* I woke the others. "There is a good wind blowing," I cried. "Get up and let us go hunting." It was early. The sky was just getting gray. I got my bait and prepared to go to my pit. My bait (see p. 161) was cut from a deer breast with the bone in it, and was about sixteen inches long, twelve inches wide, and four inches thick. I had kept it covered with grass near the meat pile; at this place the grass grew thick and was shaded by a tree. I had had no fear that wolves or foxes would disturb it. We kept our meat pile covered with blankets or hung these from a nearby tree. The blankets and the smell of the camp I knew would frighten off the wolves.

I sharpened a June berry stick sixteen inches long and skewered it in and out through my bait, three times. I tied one end of a thong to the stick at one side where it was skewered through the meat. I tied the other end of the thong in the same way at the other side. Passing over my shoulders and breast, the thong made a pack strap. Packing my bait in this manner, I reached the pit.

*Placing the Bait at the Pit.* I anchored my bait at the pit. I drew one end of the thong I had used as a carrying strap through the eye of one of the forked or pronged pins, and the other end through the eye of the other pronged pin. Then I got into the pit, knowing that I could

draw the thong down and tie it to the straight pin that was driven into the wall of the pit.<sup>1</sup>

Fig. 6c has been drawn by Goodbird to illustrate the method of fastening the bait except that a jack rabbit is used instead of the piece of deer breast. Tied to the rabbit will be noticed a little piece of red meat. This was a piece of deer lung; at its mouth appears a little blood to show the animal is freshly shot. This rabbit bait (Fig. 6c) is secured exactly as was the deer meat bait.

A study of the foregoing illustrations will show that the piece of lung is bound to the rabbit with very small threads; and that the thongs —(or thong if these are tied together to make one) securing the bait were looped around the skewer stick.

The piece of lung was taken off the bait when the hunter returned in the evening and was wrapped in grass to keep it fresh. A lung was always chosen for this purpose because magpies were always troublesome and would eat meat or fats. The lung of an animal when exposed to the air toughened so that magpies could not easily tear it. The lung also made it appear as if the lungs of the animal used as bait had been exposed by birds tearing at the carcass.

If the carcass of an animal were used for bait, the head was always laid toward the south just as the hunter himself lay in the pit. The bait was always just on the edge of the west side of the pit. It will be remembered that when an eagle swooped down to settle on the bait, the bird always passed it and returned, flying against the wind. I have heard that when an eagle circled down near the pit, the hunter sometimes moved the head of the rabbit (if such were used for bait) a little as if it were alive. This made the eagle more willing to alight on the bait. However, I never did this myself.

Such was our Hidatsa custom from the beginning when we obtained the eagle hunt ceremony from the black bears. According to tradition at first, the black bears themselves caught eagles by putting their paws on the edge of the pit instead of bait. It was not permitted to use a wildcat

---

<sup>1</sup>The Mandan appear to have used a somewhat different method of placing the bait. The hunter concealed himself in the pit under a screen of branches, over which the bait of meat was scattered (Will, G. F. and Spinden, H. J., "The Mandans. A Study of their Culture, Archaeology, and Languages" *Papers, Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology*, vol. 3, no. 4, Cambridge, 1906, 122).

Miss Densmore (*ibid.*, 60 *et seq.*) also gives an account of eagle trapping derived, in the main, from a Mandan informant, but agreeing substantially, with that for the Hidatsa. Among the Mandan, both the office of eagle catcher and the songs are hereditary. The function of the eagle catcher, who was called Old Wolverine, was to select the site and direct all proceedings. During the period when the eagle pits were visited, the men slept in a separate lodge. The traps were on the slope of a hill and differed from the Hidatsa only in the method of baiting, for instead of tying it to the cover frame, the Mandan secured the bait, a rabbit with the skin removed, to a bone stuck in the ground by the side of the pit. The eagle was caught by the very widespread method of grasping by the legs. After the eagle catching there was a four days' fast.



for bait because the wildcat is an arrow, as told in an old story. A raccoon, or spotted-tail, as we called it, was also forbidden for bait at an eagle pit.

A tale recounts how two wildcats became Indians and half the body of each wildcat was an arrow. Their flint cases (the cases in which

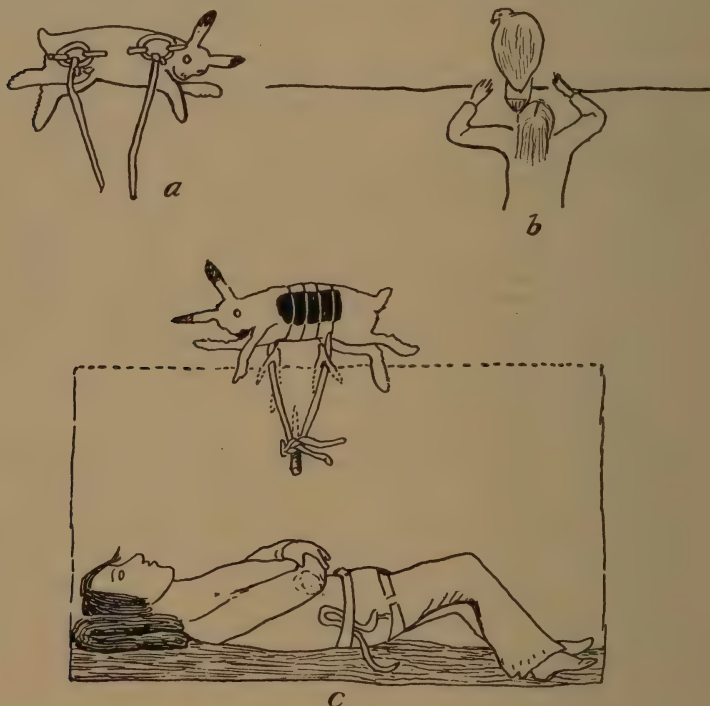


Fig. 6. *a*, Method of securing the Tying Thongs to the Bait; *b*, Method of seizing the Eagle after it has alighted on the Bait; *c*, Diagram showing the Position of the Eagle Hunter within the Pit and the Manner of securing the Bait to the Pit Wall.

they carried their flints, arrow-heads, sinews, and arrow tools) were the skins of wildcats' heads. That is, both these men were wildcats and arrows, for it must be remembered that they were spirit beings. Therefore, since all birds are afraid of arrows, to use a wildcat as bait would frighten the eagles so that they would not alight on the bait.

We believe that wildcats and raccoons are related; they belong to the same family of animals.

The black bears who originated the eagle hunt ceremonies did not use wildcats or raccoons for bait. "Their bodies are arrows," they said, "and as the eagles are afraid of arrows, they will avoid such bait."

We also knew that wolves, foxes, kit-foxes, and coyotes were in the same family; in eagle-pit language we called them, "the black bears' horses."

We scattered out each for his pit. On my back I bore my bait of deer's breast. Two others of our party had each a shoulder of a deer and three had jack rabbits for bait.<sup>1</sup> These jack rabbits were not fresh carcasses but skins stuffed with sage and dry grass. If the rabbitskin were stuffed with dry grass alone, when the eagle struck it the stuffed skin crackled and frightened the bird away. When sage was mixed with the dry grass this crackling did not occur and the bird was deceived. The sage was gathered green when we set out for an eagle hunt. The rabbitskin was taken off whole, dried, and carefully dressed and worked with the hands until very soft.

*The First Eagle.* I came to my pit and climbed in. When I had made my pit cover, I had fetched dry blue grass plucked or cut with my knife in a near-by coulée and covered the floor of the pit to the depth of about four inches with it. There was a little green grass mixed with the dry.<sup>2</sup>

I fastened my bait, thrusting the thongs through the eyes of the forked pins, and dropping the ends of the thongs down into the pit. I do not remember from which side I entered, but we were not observing the usual ceremonies in this hunt. I lashed the hanging thongs firmly to a pin in the pit wall. Making a pillow of my blanket I lay down in the pit. Looking upward I wept and wailed and cried and cried. High up in the sky I saw an eagle flying. It passed over head, going eastward. I sat up and made ready. In about half an hour I saw the eagle swoop down from the high pointed hill, in a straight course, sailing, and quite slowly. As it came close, the bird thrust forward its legs but passed over the bait, it circled about, returned again, passed over; once more it circled about, put out its legs and settled on the bait. As always when settling on the bait, the eagle faced westward.

---

<sup>1</sup>For bait, the Cheyenne used either a fresh wolfskin with meat attached or a rabbit (Grinnell, vol. 1, 300). An interesting parallel may be noted among the Hopi where the hunter lay in a circular enclosure built of stone, about four feet high, to the covering beams of which dead rabbits were tied as bait [Fewkes, J. Walter, "Property Rights among the Hopi" (*American Anthropologist*, N.S., vol. 2, pp. 690-707, 1900), 700.] The Cherokee, on the other hand, exposed the carcass of a deer killed by the eagle hunter to lure the birds (Mooney, 493).

<sup>2</sup>The Cheyenne eagle pit (Grinnell, vol. 1, 300) was dug in a secret place, large enough for the hunter to sit in with outstretched legs, but not long enough to lie in. It was carefully made and the floor covered with white sage.

I did not let it sit there! Its wings were hardly folded to its sides when I had caught the bird by the legs. In seizing the eagle I did not put out both hands, resting them together on the edge of the pit. The bird's legs were right at the very edge, on the bait. I put out my arms at either side, bringing my hands inward from right and left respectively toward the bird's legs as instructed by my father, my object being to catch the bird by its legs from either side. Unless I did this, I was likely to push the eagle away (Fig. 6b).

I seized the eagle's legs, one in either hand, raising the pit cover with my head. The eagle had fallen on its breast, with wings outspread and mouth wide open; it was making a sound like *ts-ts-ts-sss*, rather loud. It was not flapping its wings. Firmly grasping both its legs I climbed out of the pit, drew the thong from under my belt and bound its legs, crossing them and with one end of the same thong I bound the wings.<sup>1</sup> The eagle's legs were bound horizontally, not vertically. During the tying process eagles always clenched their claws and did not struggle. I think no man could have bound an eagle that struggled and fought.

*Plucking the Plumes.* With my thumb nail I pushed back the gummy flesh around the quills of the tail feathers and began at one side to pluck out all the long plumes. These I made into a *naksúti* or weave. There were twelve of these long feathers. I was very happy at my catch. "I will have these feathers for a fan," I thought, "and I can use the wings for fans also, when I go courting; or, I can give these feathers away; I am sure I will receive a horse for them."

*Tying out the Eagle in Camp.* It was not yet noon, but I returned to camp. I tied a thong to the eagle's left leg, knotting it six or seven times for fear the bird might try to escape. I fastened the other end of the thong to a small log (a foot in diameter and an Indian fathom long) sufficiently long to permit the eagle to move in a radius of two feet. The eagle did not struggle to escape but perched on the log.

I wanted to feed my eagle, and putting a piece of meat on the end of a long stick I offered it to the bird, but it refused to eat. While thus engaged I saw a number of other eagles flying far over head above the hills. My eagle saw them. I felt a little sorry that I had not stayed in the pit as I might have caught more eagles.

*The Others Report.* My friend, Two-bulls, returned to camp in the afternoon. He was pleased when he saw my catch. "I saw more than

---

<sup>1</sup>Dixon states that among the Northern Maidu "The eagle was never shot . . . ; as to do so would be sure to bring bad luck, make the bow warp, and the arrows break." (Dixon, Roland B., "The Northern Maidu" *Bulletin, American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 17, part 3, 1905), 195.



ten eagles, but they all 'fought my bait' and went away again," he said. One eagle tore my jack rabbit skin, tearing the right leg right off it."

The others returned, one by one, from their pits. None had caught any eagles and all were pleased at my good fortune. I had eaten at noon when I arrived in camp; each of the other hunters ate when he came in. We all brought back our bait.

We learned afterwards, that the eagles fought Two-bulls' bait because he had placed it too near the edge. Another reason they did not stop at his pit was because he smoked in it; we found afterwards this should never be done. We had also taken our guns with us to our pits, another thing forbidden eagle hunters.

All the members of the party had seen eagles. "One just touched my bait and went on," said one. "One came down close to my bait but flew on without stopping," said another.

*Fats and their Preparation.* Two-bulls and I rose early the next morning. "Let us go down to the river and see in what direction the wind blows," I said to him. We found the wind was from the east. We returned to camp and I called out, "Get up, boys; the wind is from the east. Let us get breakfast and build our lodge." All arose.

We roasted dried meat this morning, using a three-pronged fork of green wood (p. 126). When roasting meat, I did not hold the piece directly over the fire but with the green fork tipped rather over to one side. We ate the roasted meat with fats that had been dried. We did not eat any parched corn this morning although we still had a small store of it. We tried to husband our corn, eating only a small handful at a time.

"I want to roast my fats," said Fire-above. This to me was a new way of preparing fats. Fire-above was part Crow and knew Crow customs. On a game animal's back are two masses of fat. These, from an animal we had killed, Fire-above cut in half. He skewered a piece on a green stick for a spit much as eagle bait is skewered and thrust the spit in the ground, leaning it toward the fire. He made four spits for four pieces of fat.

Fire-above turned the fats so that both sides were roasted. When they were cooked he cut them up, and wrapping them in two pieces of calico, slung the two bundles like saddle bags over one of the drying stages. "We will make some good meals off these fats," he said.

Though much of the grease had been tried out in cooking, the roasted pieces, eaten cold the next meal, were almost like lard. An old way of preparing these fats was to boil them in kettles and then dry them in the sun.

Other back fats were hung on the stage to dry. When wanted, one would break off a piece and eat it raw; prepared thus, it was very good. The fats from the paunch of an animal were always roasted and eaten with dried or fresh meat and before the fats got cold. I never saw paunch fats prepared for keeping by boiling.

Kidney fats were split into large slices and dried. They were eaten raw or briefly boiled. They were excellent to use in making corn balls; raw kidney fats were held over a fire on a stick and warmed or roasted until soft, and then put in a corn mortar and pounded with parched corn.

Belly fats were the most savory; but one could not eat much. If one ate a piece half as big as his fist, his stomach would refuse more because the fat was so oily. Belly fats were cut into strips and after boiling were strung on spits like slices of squash and dried on the drying stage. Prepared thus, they were eaten cold, without further preparation.

*The Hunting Lodge.* We began the building of our lodge by gathering sticks, dead poles, etc., some long, others short, and piling them up near the leaning tree described. The longer and heavier poles or logs were leaned against the tree trunk, and the shorter ones against these. Some of the logs stood even with the top of the trunk and others projected upwards; for we had no ax to finish off our work neatly. We filled the interstices between the logs with dry branches broken from trees with our hands; we used many of these in this way.

The walls were reinforced around the bottom with short poles, sticks, and logs, converting the lodge into a kind of fort. We covered every hole or open space and made the walls very thick, lest enemies shoot through them. We heaped earth around the bottom to the height of about a foot. The work was rather rough, but we did not have the proper tools, though for a temporary lodge, it was sufficiently neat.

The door sill, about a foot high, was of three small logs, that we stepped over. Above the door we placed a small log resting on forks; above this, four or five small logs reached up to within a foot of the leaning trunk. We left the door open, not covering it with a skin or blanket; we needed our blankets for bedding. Inside, we put dry grass, for our beds; but we provided no fireplace. When the lodge was finished the floor was almost triangular in shape. We were one day building our lodge.

The height of the lodge to the tree trunk, at the highest point within, was such that I could stand under and just touch the trunk with my hands. At its greatest width the lodge was three and a half paces wide and its depth was about five paces.

Fig. 5c is a sketch by Goodbird of a small model I have made of the frame of this lodge. The construction of the door is shown quite well. The lintel rests in two forked posts, the three logs composing it lying one above the other. The sill, as will be observed, is of three logs held in place by two short posts or stakes.

After eating our noon meal, we rested and smoked for a time, but not long. I did not smoke much myself.

*An Elk is Killed.* Toward evening we said, "Let us hunt and get some fresh meat." I added, "I want some meat to feed my eagle." Fire-above, Wolf, and I went down to the river to see if a deer had come down to drink. Two-bulls, White-back, and Fast-dog went to the edge of the woods to intercept any deer that might come out to the hills to eat fresh grass, as they often did at evening.

My two friends and I went up the river, knowing no game would be found near our camp. On a sandbar we spied two doe elks, drinking. We were quietly skirting around the trees and had approached the elks when we heard two shots over toward the hills and a yell, "*Hwu-u-u-u!*" "Our friends have killed game," we cried. Knowing our own game had now fled, we pushed through the timber and found our friends awaiting us. They had killed a big buck elk.

It was growing dark but we butchered the carcass. Not having had our evening meal we ate the liver and kidneys raw and while still warm. The liver was sweet and good, as it always was in the elks' breeding season. This was true always of buck elks, but not of does.

A buffalo cow liver was best to eat in the spring, when it was sweet and fat. The old people say that buffalo cow liver was always palatable. The liver of a buck deer, or of a buffalo bull was no better in the breeding season than at other seasons. We thought the buffalo cow's liver better in the spring because she ate snow.

I cut a big piece of loin meat from the dead elk to feed to my eagle. "We cannot carry all the rest of the meat to our camp tonight," we said. "We must wait until morning." We piled the meat on some grass and covered it with the skin, and tied our head cloths to sticks thrust in the ground about the meat pile to frighten the wolves. We all urinated on the grass not far away, knowing the smell would also keep the wolves away.

I fed the meat I had brought home to the eagle. For our own supper we roasted dried meat and ate it with fats. Fire-above was hungry and ate too much of the rich belly fats. In the night, one of the party awoke, and called out, "Fire-above, when you belch I smell rotten things."



"It is so," said Fire-above, "I ate a little too much." Soon after he said, "I must go outside," and hurried out of the lodge. He vomited and his bowels ran off freely, and he continued sick all night.

*Another Eagle.* The next morning, one of the party returning from the river, called, "I am not sure, but I think a good wind blows today."<sup>1</sup> "We will go out to the pits," we said, "and if the wind is favorable we will stay there." We set forth with our bait and found a faint breeze coming from the west. I secured my bait at the edge of my pit and entered. Lying on my back, looking up at the sky, wearied me and now and then I sat up for a while. By and by, I saw an eagle very high in the air. It passed eastward over the pit, but I said to myself, "I think that eagle will come back." Sure enough, the bird came down, flying about as high as is the ceiling of my cabin. It settled quietly, its left foot on my bait; its right foot broke through my pit cover, but being alert and ready, I seized its right leg and almost at the same instant grasped its left leg with my left hand. An eagle hunter in his pit must be ever ready, for if it sees anything that looks unnatural an eagle will fly away at once. Stooping for my bait, the eagle had alighted at the edge of my pit, facing west, with its tail over the pit. It was an *i'pxoki*, or young white-headed eagle.

As on the day of my first catch I was too excited to remain longer in the pit. I hastened to camp and fastened my new catch on the log beside my other eagle. I thought perhaps my newly caught bird was hungry; I went over to our pile of elk meat and fetched back the breast piece. I tried to feed both birds, but the second eagle ruffled its feathers and appeared angry and would not eat.

Two-bulls came in and I showed him my second eagle. "Good," he said, "but just as before, several eagles stooped to my pit but each one fought the bait, tore it, and flew away. The others of our party came in; none had caught an eagle, although eagles had come to the pits. "I am going to change my bait," said one. "Maybe the eagles do not like my jack rabbit or for some reason fear it. I am going to use meat for my bait as you do."

The next day there was a bad wind and we remained in camp. We were expecting some hunters, friends from Crow-flies-high's village, whom we had told to meet us at our camping place. We spent the day drying our elk meat that we might have provisions when our friends

---

<sup>1</sup>"The Arikara trapped eagles only when a west wind was blowing." Curtis, Edward S., *The North American Indian*, vol. 5, 1909, 88.

came. For the next four or five days an unfavorable wind blew, and we stayed in camp, eating and smoking, or otherwise amusing ourselves.

*A Third Eagle.* Finally, a good wind blew and we took our bait to the pits.<sup>1</sup> Looking up out of my pit I saw a white spot in the air. "That is an eagle," I said to myself. I watched a long time and was growing inattentive, when I heard a slight rustling noise. I carefully raised my head and peeking out over the pit's edge, I saw the head of an eagle that was walking toward the pit. It was a white-headed eagle. It came up on the east side of the pit, quite to its edge, and appeared to be looking into it. I was eager to catch the bird but was afraid, for I had heard that white-headed eagles never get excited, and that it was very difficult to catch one as it faced the hunter.

The eagle stood on the edge of the pit a long time. "I had better try to catch it," I thought, "or the bird will fly away." But I was still fearful lest the bird fight me. I had heard many tales from old men; how dangerous white-headed eagles were and how they struggled and fought, so that it was almost impossible to catch one facing the hunter. No matter how quick the hunter is with his hands, I was told, the eagle will be quicker!

Kneeling in the pit on one knee, I raised my hands carefully and thrust them suddenly forward to seize the eagle's legs. The eagle appeared to be looking right down at me as I did this and was so close that I thought it could hear the beatings of my heart. I caught the bird by both legs simultaneously; but in my excitement I raised my head, thus lifting the pit cover a little and the eagle struck at me with its beak. I turned my head slightly and avoided the blow. I climbed out of the pit and twisting over the eagle's legs turned it over on its breast; I put my left knee on the bird's back and tried to tie its legs and wings.

The eagle struggled fiercely, nearly throwing me off and threatening at times to fly away with me on its back! I was in real fear of being hurt, for white-headed eagles are strong. When at last I had the eagle bound, it began to quiver and pant, and seemed to get excited.<sup>2</sup>

I caught all three eagles, thus, crouched on one knee. One had to be constantly alert. An eagle never stopped long on the bait, only a moment, and one must be ready to seize it.

---

<sup>1</sup>The Nez Percé also caught eagles in pits, though there seem to have been some variations in the details of the method: the pit cover had three or four openings; the bird was seized by the feet as did the Hidatsa, but apparently two hunters were always present for Spinden states "The feet of the eagle were seized by the concealed hunter, while another rushed out and killed the bird." [Spinden, Herbert Joseph, "The Nez Percé Indians" (*Memoirs, American Anthropological Association*, vol. 2, part 3, 1908), 215.]

<sup>2</sup>The word excited is often used by Goodbird in the sense of losing self control, especially as represented by one's mystery power. In war accounts, when a warrior gets excited, it means he has lost his self possession and is at the mercy of another. There is also the accompanying idea frequently that the excited warrior's gods have deserted him or that his enemy's mystery power has overcome his own mystery power.—G. L. W.

My father once seized a four-spot eagle that put its claws through his arm; however the wound was not deep, because the eagle did not have a firm hold. Another man also was wounded by an eagle; the bird's claws went quite through his arm.

With my eagle's legs tied, I plucked out the tail feathers in the usual way and wove them into a *naksúti*. I bore the eagle to our camp. It was not quite noon yet. I now had three eagles on the log.

In olden days the hunters of my tribe did not care to catch white-headed eagles because they were dangerous birds that fought and because their feathers<sup>1</sup> were not used to make war-bonnets and their value therefore was not high.

*Reports of the other Hunters.* I was still in camp when I heard someone call from across the river: "*He-e-e-eh!*" Going down to the river bank I saw a man on the other side, where the elk had crossed. "Where is your camp?" the man called. "Here," I answered. "Tomorrow the hunters you are expecting will camp in the big woods over here," he called. "They have sent me ahead to tell you." "We have provisions here, dried meat," I called. "Have you a boat?" "Yes," he answered, "we have two bull-boats we brought up from the village." These boats had been brought up on horse travois.

Evening came and the hunters of our party came in. All told the same story: "Eagles came, fought my bait, and went on," said one; "I saw just one foot of an eagle," said another; "My meat bait did not help me any," said Two-bulls who had changed his bait. "The eagles fought my bait just as before."

I told them of the coming of the hunters across the river. "Let us go, friends," I said, "you are not catching any eagles anyway and the hunters will be here tomorrow. I sent them word that we had meat and told them to meet us here. We had better join them and go." "Good," they said. "We have had bad luck, but that can't be helped. We will join the hunters when they come."

Early the next morning we ate and divided our meat. "You select your portion first," we said to White-back. When meat was to be divided it was our custom to give the first choice to any boy or old man who might be in camp. We believed a boy or an old man not as strong and active as a young man and both should therefore be cared for by the young and strong. We considered it ungenerous of the young and strong to seize

---

<sup>1</sup>Brackenridge writes of the Arikara: "They always have a quantity of feathers about them; those of the black eagle are most esteemed." (Brackenridge, H. M., *Journal of a Voyage up the River Missouri; performed in Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*, Baltimore, 1816; 151.



the best for themselves. So also, if a present were made to one's society, the members gave it to an old man or a boy, or to a needy young man. In a dance, a horse or something else of value, was always given to one of the old men.

White-back took a fourth of all the back fats. "Wait," we said, "we want to cut up those back fats and distribute them among us all." "But you told me to make my selection," White-back replied. All laughed. "Let him have them," we said. "We told him to make his choice." But we cut up the rest of the back fats and divided them among us all. And so we did with the rest of our meat. Our method of distribution was as follows. The men arose one by one and each selected one good piece. When each had taken a piece, the round was again made, and so until all the meat was distributed.

*Releasing the Eagles.* I now said, "I want to release my eagles.<sup>1</sup> I want you to help me; we will carry the birds through the woods and set them free at the hills yonder." "I will help you," cried Two-bulls. "I want you to help me with that white-headed one," I told him. "I will," he said, and added "you are a brave man to capture white-headed eagles. They never get excited and are dangerous to take. If you should lose one of your eyes while capturing a white-headed eagle, you would feel ashamed afterwards to have only one eye." Wolf also said, "I will help you with that young white-headed eagle."

Each of us threw a blanket over his bird, detached the eagle's leg from the log, and bound its legs and wings. We bore the eagles away, each carrying the bird in his arms with the head turned down toward the ground. To have carried an eagle on its back we thought something of an indignity. Eagles were sacred birds and we treated them with respect.

We released the eagles at a hill side and saw them fly away and settle on the tops of neighboring hills. We had not killed the eagles, for although we were young and rather irreverent, we knew the birds were sacred<sup>2</sup> and we feared trouble might come upon us.

*Meeting Friends.* In preparation for the time when our friends would call us to cross the river, we bore our blankets and meat down the

---

<sup>1</sup>Eagles captured by the Hopi are taken to the pueblo, but one bird was always released after a prayer-stick was tied to its leg, that it might return to its comrades carrying with it the hunter's prayers. (Fewkes, J. Walter, "Property Right in Eagles among the Hopi" *American Anthropologist*, N.S. vol. 2, pp. 690-707, 1900.)

<sup>2</sup>This attitude of veneration toward the eagle and the belief in its sacred character has been noted not only among the Hidatsa, but also among the Blackfoot, Cheyenne, and Pawnee where eagle trapping appears to have been a ceremonial function. In the Pueblo area, particularly at Zuni and Hopi, eagles were kept for their feathers which were highly esteemed because of their sacred character (Winship, George Parker, "The Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542" (*Fourteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology*, part 1, pp. 329-613, Washington, 1896, 516).] Among the Cherokee (Mooney, 492-493) where eagle killing was a tribal affair preliminary to the eagle dance, the bird was also believed to be sacred.

bank so as to make it easier to load them into the boats. We were nearly ready when we heard a shot on our side of the river, over toward the eagle pits. "An enemy," we cried, and seized our weapons. But a voice called to us out of the woods, "Where is your camp?" "Here," we answered, recognizing Two-shields' voice. He was mounted and he had a bunch of eagle wings tied to his saddle. "You have killed my eagles," I cried. "Why did you do that? Eagles are sacred birds." "Well," he answered, "I never hunt eagles in a pit, so they cannot hurt me. I am not afraid. I crossed the Missouri yesterday," he continued, "I thought I would find you here somewhere, so came straight to this place."

Just then someone across the river yelled, "*Hi-hi!*" On the other side we saw two men with horses and travois, each loaded with a bull-boat. They unloaded the boats and crossed the river. We packed our goods in the boats, but made several trips as the boats were small. Two-shields swam his horse across.

In the party on the other side were three men with five horses. Two-shields was not one of the three, but like us, joined them.

We loaded our meat on the travois and in bags bound to the saddles. We all mounted, two men on a horse, and set out to hunt and visit the Poplar Sioux,<sup>1</sup> as we had planned before leaving our village. We did not return home until the following summer, staying in the Sioux camp all winter.

Our eagle hunting party had been in camp about twenty days.

*What Became of my Eagle Feathers.* I wanted to make a fan of the feathers of my young eagle or exchange them for a horse. At our second camp, after leaving the pits, we knew we were approaching the camp of Teton and Assiniboin we sought. Hunts-enemy said to me, "I see you have some young golden eagle feathers. I want you to adopt one of these Assiniboin whom I know. He is good and true and has many horses. I will make you a sacred pipe and a war-bonnet. I will put twelve golden eagle feathers on the war-bonnet, six in front and six in back; I will put nine of the white-headed eagle feathers colored green, on each side of the war bonnet, thirty feathers in all.

"On the sacred child pipe I will put six white-headed eagle feathers, colored red. I will make all these properly for you, for I have that privilege in this sacred child's ceremony. I am sure you will receive something from that good Assiniboin for he has many horses and I know the Assiniboin value these feathers very highly. I feel sure this Assini-

---

<sup>1</sup>Fort Peck Reservation, Montana, occupied by Assiniboin, and stragglers from the Teton, and other divisions of the Dakota.

boin will be willing to be adopted. I will persuade him to go among these Sioux (and Assiniboin) and explain that you come from that village down the river and that you have a war-bonnet and a good buckskin coat embroidered with porcupine quills." This coat had been brought up from the village for me by the hunters.

One of the Assiniboin was willing to be adopted. He had two wives and was going to leave one wife out of the ceremony. She got angry and took away one of the two horses he was going to give me. So he sent word to me, "I will have to give up this matter."

Hunts-enemy and Standing-bear then got another Sioux to consent. His name was Red-leaves. They told him, "This man is not of our people, but comes from Fort Berthold; he will give a sacred pipe, a war-bonnet, and a buckskin coat." "Good," said Red-leaves. "I have a wife and children in this tent. Let this man furnish suits for my whole family. I have five horses; they and this tent and everything in it are his."

So I got all this property for my eagle feathers.



## EAGLE TRAPPING CEREMONIES<sup>1</sup>

My father hunted eagles, for he had great power in the black bears' prayers. He took me with him on an eagle hunt<sup>2</sup> when I was fifteen years old. It was in September, the weather was warm, and the leaves were turning yellow. My father, Small-ankle, was leader of the party; other members were Short-bull, Mussel-necklace, Big-bull, Packs-moccasin, Worn-out, Took-away-a-gun, Porcupine-head, No-first-finger, Old-bear, and myself; and there were three women, Short-bull's wife, Lives-in-red-butte; Snake-woman, wife of Big-bull; Worn-out's wife, (I think her name was Grasshopper-woman); and a lad of my own age, Short-bull's son, named Broom.

The party camped in six tipis carried on travois; for we had five or six horse travois and more than twenty horses. Some of these were fast horses and were not ridden, for we wished to save them for hunting buffaloes. The women rode horses that dragged travois. Broom and I also had mounts. Five or six dogs accompanied us, following their owners.

At night we slept on robes, putting saddleskins (or blankets) under these; or grass, if we found it. For food, we depended upon game. Took-away-a-gun was an especially good hunter. There were seven guns in the party. Porcupine-head, No-first-finger, and Old-bear, all young men of about twenty, were armed with bow and arrows; but they did not hunt on the way out. We took with us some corn, dried squash and beans, in various bags made of skin, and packed on travois or on the backs of our horses.

*Re-building an Old Hunting Lodge.* We crossed over to the north side of the Little Missouri, at a place thirty miles west of what is now Independence. In the woods along the stream, the men searched and found an old eagle hunters' lodge, which they had known was there, for it has belonged to my father's brother. It had been dug into the side of a hill. When we found a cavity in the hillside, we dug and discovered it was the site of the old lodge. We took three days to excavate and clean out the old site. The actual building of the lodge took a little more than a day.

---

<sup>1</sup>Related in the summer of 1915, by Wolf-chief, an Hidatsa born about 1849. In a review of the older literature on the Hidatsa we have found but few references to the ceremonial features of eagle trapping. Matthews (*ibid.*, 58-59) gives a succinct account, which in its general outlines parallels that by Wolf-chief. Curtis (vol. 4, 137) a much later observer of the Hidatsa, states that taking eagles was attended with "much supplication," as a placation to the eagle spirit, but does not describe the ceremony.

<sup>2</sup>The ownership of eagle hunting grounds and the pits appears to have been vested in the Hidatsa moieties. Lowie writes: "In the old days each Hidatsa moiety had its own territory for eagle-hunting, and the complementary moiety was forbidden to hunt eagles or use the pits there." This series, vol. 21, 21.

From the hill side we cut rather small forked poplar trees, which we trimmed into short posts to be placed in the hill side. Longer poles, true tent poles, were to meet and rest against the forked posts, from the door side of the lodge. When completed, the lodge was of poles-and-bark on only one side (Fig. 7).

In the illustration, (Fig. 7) a sloping hill is shown, the declivity falling directly toward the spectator. At the top appear the short forked



Fig. 7. Diagrammatic Sketch of Small-ankle's Eagle Hunters' Lodge.

stakes or posts; leaning against these and rising from the foreground are the full-sized tent poles meeting tipi-shape at the top. Under the tent poles appears the artificial half-cave, the excavated hill side making one side of the lodge. As the illustration is little more than a diagram, the tent poles are left uncovered to show the interior of the lodge. On the hill side above, appears a half-sketch of myself hanging by a thong to a small tree, as will be explained hereafter.

The door of the lodge does not appear in the drawing. It was, of course, directly in front between the two lodge poles in the foreground. It was a buffalo bull hide, cut square, and hung with the fur side in. The

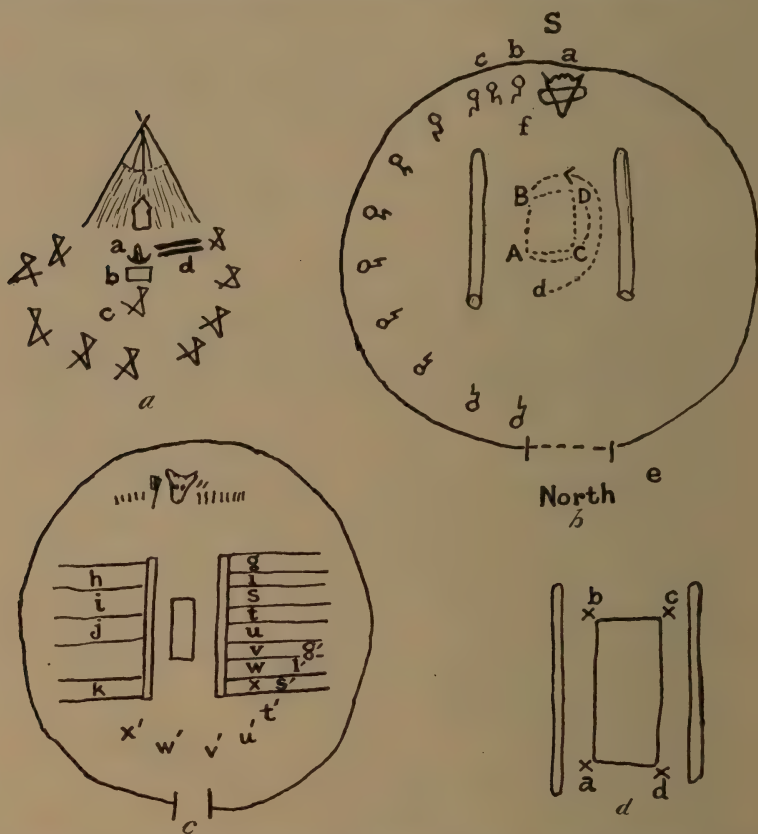


Fig. 8. *a*, Diagram showing Positions of seated Participants and of Sacred Objects before the Eagle Hunting Lodge; *b*, The Seating Arrangements in the Lodge and the Maneuvers of the Participants (*a*, buffalo skull; *b*, Small-ankle; *c*, Wolf-chief); *c*, Diagram showing Position of Men, as They stood in Front of the Door, facing the Fire Pit, before setting out for the Eagle Pits; *d*, Diagram representing the Fireplace and Snake Sticks of an Eagle Hunter's Lodge.

(upper) corners were bound securely to two of the poles making the frame of the lodge; for this purpose the securing thongs were drawn through holes bored through the grass-and-earth roof covering. The lodge had to be made very secure against attacks by enemies and the earth roof covering was rather thick.



*Small-ankle offers Prayers.* The lodge now built, my father prepared to offer prayers. It was in the afternoon, about three o'clock. All the men of the party sat outside of the lodge in a half circle facing it.

My father opened his sacred bundle and laid the sacred objects on the ground. These were a black bear's foot, dried with the bones in it; a bunch of soft feathers from under an eagle's wing or tail; a flint arrow-head; and some eagle tail feathers. My father had placed a buffalo skull on the ground with eyes facing the lodge. He laid the sacred objects just behind the skull. He sat in the middle of the semicircle, behind the sacred objects. On one side of the skull lay two poles or small logs that we called our pillow sticks; they represented snakes and were for this reason also called snake sticks. They were of ash, two inches thick and an Indian fathom long. The arrangement of the participants in the ceremony and the sacred objects is shown in the diagram (Fig. 8a).

My father, still sitting, prayed: "O my gods, the black bear sacred objects, we have made this lodge for you, now I must take you in it. I want you to give us all we ask; I want buffalo to come so that we shall have plenty of meat. If enemies are foolish enough to attack us, may we kill them all. When our hunt is over, may we reach home safely. You are gods; I want you to do all this for us if you can." As he prayed, my father looked down at the sacred objects before him as if he were talking to them, as indeed he was. He now took up the medicine objects and laid them on the buffalo skull; he lifted the skull in his hands with the sacred objects upon it, and holding it before him, sang a mystery song: "Come into my lodge!" It was addressed to the skull and was not a part of the black bear songs. Calling to the company, "Come on, my friends, let us go in," and still bearing the skull with the sacred objects, he entered the lodge and the others followed.

In the meantime, the women were in a camp we had made for them near the creek. A woman must not enter an eagle hunters' lodge for if she did no eagles would be caught. There was an exception to this rule, as will be explained later (p. 168).

*Digging the Fireplace.* Following my father with the others, I was the very last to enter the lodge.<sup>1</sup> Small-ankle walked straight across the

---

<sup>1</sup>Matthews in his rather generalized description of eagle hunting ceremonies makes it clear that the hunters must stay in the ceremonial lodge for four days and return to the traps the same number of times (*ibid.*, 59), spending the day at the pits and returning to the lodge for the night. It will be noted that Wolf-chief's account is very hazy on this point since there is no definite statement of the length of time allotted for the ceremony.

Among the Arapaho also eagle hunting had some ceremonial significance: Only certain men hunted eagles; they neither ate nor drank for four days, rubbing medicine on their hands. It was said that fifty or a hundred eagles might be caught in four days. Kroeber, A. L., "The Arapaho" (*Bulletin, American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 18, 1902), 22.

floor and laid the buffalo skull, eyes facing the center of the floor, in the rear of the lodge; the sacred objects were still on the skull. My father sat on the right of the skull, facing the door. The other members of the party, following in order, sat around the wall of the lodge on the east side, the lodge facing the north. I do not think there was any rule requiring that the lodge face northward, nor any reason, except convenience, that the company sit on the east side. I had entered last and was about to seat myself on the end when my father called to me, "Come over here," and he seated me at his right. (Fig. 8b).

Small-ankle now arose and walked to the center of the room where he stood, facing the skull and sacred objects. "Bring me the pillow sticks," he called. One of the men arose and fetched them from outside the lodge. Still facing the skull and holding the pillow sticks, one on either side, in an upright position and with the lower end of the stick resting on the ground, Small-ankle sang the snakes' song. I do not remember the words of the song.

Addressing me, my father said, "I have sung this snakes' song because these two pillow sticks represent snakes and are the snake pillows. I now lay them here on the floor with the heavier end of each pointed toward the sacred objects." As he said this he gently placed the sticks on the floor, where they lay parallel and about five feet apart.

Small-ankle went to his sacred bundle, opened it, and took out a digging-stick about two feet long, which he wrapped with buffalo hair, bound down with a strip of bearskin, about two feet long and a half inch wide, and with the fur on. It was wrapped a few times about the digging-stick.

Small-ankle returned to the center of the lodge, faced the skull and sacred objects again, and sang the black bears' song. As he sang, holding the digging-stick before him, point downward, but not moving from his place, he pretended to mark off a rectangular space in the center of the floor, as shown by dotted lines in Fig. 8b. The side, AB, of the rectangle was first marked; then CD, BD, and AC in order.

During this "marking" (I call it marking though the digging-stick did not touch the ground) Small-ankle had been standing at the place marked d in (Fig. 8b). He now walked, as indicated by the dotted lines, around the corners C and D, to B, which he marked in reality, lightly thrusting the point of the digging-stick into the ground; and retracing his steps, he marked the corners D, C, and A in the same way and in order.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Small-ankle's order of marking the corners appears to be against the sun.—G.L.W.

He now called me to him. "Hold out your shirt," he said. I held up the front edge of my shirt making it into a lap; into this he dropped the little bits of earth he had pried up with his digging-stick when he marked the four corners. "Take these bits of earth out into the woods," he said "and throw them away."

This ceremony was to mark off the fireplace which, rectangular in shape, represented an eagle hunter's pit.

I went out and cast away the bits of earth as bidden. I returned to find my father still standing in his place at *d* (Fig. 8b). "Come here," he said. "I want you to dig this fireplace. You will find my knife where I sat." I found a butcher knife, as he said, at his place near the buffalo skull. I began digging with this. Just before I began, my father gave me a piece of "black medicine," saying, "Chew this and blow it over your body and face and hair and breast; all over you!" This was to protect me from adverse supernatural influences.

"Bring your robe," my father called to Old-bear. Old-bear and No-first-finger arose and brought Old-bear's robe, spreading it on the floor before me. I was already digging the earth up at the edge of the newly marked fireplace. "As you dig, throw the earth out upon the robe," said my father. As I loosened the earth with my knife, No-first-finger scooped it up with his hands and cast it on the robe. "Carry the dirt outside and drop it at the left of the door," said my father. I use left and right as Indians do, as of one coming out of the lodge door.

The fireplace, as marked out by Small-ankle, was about four feet long, north and south, and two feet wide east and west. I continued digging until it was about a foot deep. I cast out the loose earth or laid it on the edge of the fireplace, where No-first-finger and Old-bear scooped it up with their hands and laid it on the robe. The fireplace was sacred and the two men were careful not to come too near, or to touch it; I could do so, because I had been appointed to dig the fireplace.

When the robe was filled with the loose earth, Old-bear and his helper took it up by the corners, and one walking backwards and the other forwards, they bore it out of the door and emptied it at the place marked *e* in Fig. 8b. It will be seen that this place, *e*, is at the left of the door going out. We looked upon a lodge as having a face of which the door is the mouth. When, therefore, we speak of right and left of a lodge we always mean right and left from within facing the door. This use of the words right and left will be observed throughout this account. Old-bear and No-first-finger made, I think, two trips carrying out the earth dug from the fireplace. I do not know why the dirt was emptied at the



left of the door; but I do know that when an eagle hunter dug his pit, the dirt was carried away and deposited in some place out of sight, and where it would not be walked upon.

During the time of the digging, Small-ankle sat at b (Fig. 8b). When I had dug the fireplace, he said, "Come here." I advanced toward him and stood before the skull and sacred objects. My father said, "Stand facing the west." I did so at f, (Fig. 8b). "The fireplace represents one of the sacred eagle hunters' pits. You have worked in it and have stepped in it and had your hands in it, and it will make you heavy (sic). But I have power to make you light again." He brushed me lightly, with a little bunch of sage first, down my back, then, my front. My father rose to do this as I stood facing the west; I think he first brushed me on the left side as he stood behind me; then my back, then my right side, then my front. This is the order of the ceremony as prescribed for us from old times.<sup>1</sup> The ceremony concluded, I took my place again at Small-ankle's right (c) (Fig. 8b).

Small-ankle now filled his pipe, lighted it, and still sitting, held the lighted pipe, stem forward, toward the pit and prayed: "You pit, I pray you smoke. Try to take something to yourself."

I think my father meant that the pit should take eagles unto itself; he prayed for good hunting. The pit was now sacred and it had mind, or spirit power, in itself.

*The Evening Meal in the Camp.* It was now sunset and Small-ankle called, "We must now go to our camp and eat and then we must return to the lodge, for there are ceremonies I have not yet performed. Now I will appoint the officers.

"My helper will be Short-bull, who will sit next to me, on my right. I will appoint one to be Good-shooter after our return here from our supper. I will appoint Kuahä'wi to be *Īxtaki*."<sup>2</sup>

Kuahä'wi was then my name for I was not yet called Wolf-chief; *Īxtaki* referred to the grizzly bear that in the beginning of the black bear ceremonies was servant to the others.

The Hidatsa word for black bear is *hacī'da*, and this we do not recognize as a true bear. The latter is only the grizzly, which we call *náxpitsi*. The ceremonies were originated by the black bears (*hacī'da*); but only one, a grizzly (*náxpitsi*) was invited to be servant to the others. He fetched water, tended the fire, and looked after other such things. This

<sup>1</sup>It will be noted that as Wolf-chief stood facing the west, the order was, south, east, north, west, or against the sun.—G. L. W.

<sup>2</sup>*Ī'taki* or *Ījtaki*?—G. L. W.

servant was called *Íxtąki*. Ever afterwards in the black bear ceremonies, the one appointed to take the grizzly's place and be servant to the others, was called *Íxtąki*. Sometimes, in fun, I now say to my little son Paul, "*Íxtąki*, bring me my pipe." And I chuckle to myself, for he does not know what it means.

Meanwhile, the women of the party had been setting up a tipi for their own use, making their camp about fifteen yards away on the bank of a little brook that flowed from a spring near the eagle-hunting lodge. We had brought along three skin tipis; and the women pitched the largest of these for their own use.

As Small-ankle had suggested, we all went out for supper and ate in the big tipi. We had boiled deer meat, killed on the way up. Short-bull and my father ate together, as they had camped together in the same tipi on the way up. My father and I ate from the same wooden bowl; and drank both from another, smaller wooden bowl, which was about two feet wide and two inches deep. Each woman ate with her husband, from the same bowl.

On the way to the camping place, five camped in Short-bull's tent; Short-bull, his wife, Broom, Small-ankle, and myself. We all slept together at night. We had three wooden bowls in the tent, to be used by the five persons.

*Apportioning Places for the Beds.* Supper eaten, the men entered the hunting lodge and Small-ankle said, "Packs-moccasin, you shall be Mă'diisąkihě, or Good-shooter. Your bed shall be near the sacred objects and the buffalo skull." This bed, g, (Fig. 9) was on the west side of the lodge. As the latter faced north, the cardinal points in the illustration are easily determined.

I will now name the other beds in the hunting lodge (Fig. 9).

My father, Small-ankle, as leader of the party was called Hacı'da-itąka or Old-male-black-bear. His bed was at h.

Short-bull was called Ökoxtı, helper or assistant. His bed was at i.

Broom had his bed at j.

As Íxtąki I had my bed at k.

At l slept Mussel-necklace, called Mă'disąkihě-ü'ti-aduwádihěc,<sup>1</sup> or Good-shooter's helper. It was the duty of Good-shooter to pierce with an arrow the skin of anyone in camp, wishing to suffer or fast. If Good-shooter were absent, his helper performed this task.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ü'ti, I think, means end; aduwádi means something added extra. At the fore end of the feather on an arrow a little colored bit of the feather is often left. This is called ü'ti-aduwádihě.—Wolf-chief.

Other members of the party slept at s, t, u, v, w, and x. I cannot now recollect just who occupied any particular one of these beds, but for convenience in describing the ceremonies of the lodge I have named one of the party for each bed in order, Big-bull, Took-away-a-gun, No-first-finger, Porcupine-head, Old-bear, and Worn-out. (Fig. 9.)

*Burning Incense.* It was Good-shooter's duty to keep the pipe and to burn incense of the plant we call "yellow top"<sup>1</sup> in the morning, and in

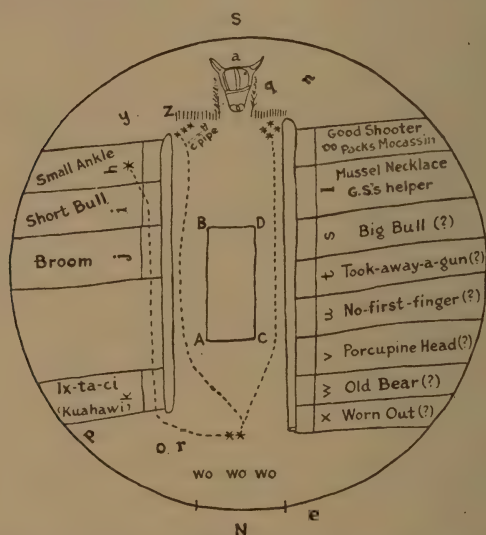


Fig. 9. Diagram of Interior of Ceremonial Lodge showing Position of Participants, Sacred Objects, and the Maneuvers with Offering Sticks.

the evening and also at noon if he were in camp, at the place marked n in Fig. 9. With a green stick split at the end for tongs, he lifted coals from the lodge fire and laid them at n and on these he laid the incense plants, praying, as he did so, to the sacred objects on the buffalo skull to give the party many eagles. He also prayed to the pit (fireplace), to the two snake sticks, and to a snare on a peeled stick in the wall. The snare was of our native hemp. The stick was painted red and represented the sun; the snare represented the sun's snare. It hung on the wall above the place marked n.

Another stick and snare exactly like these, hung over my bed at k. This stick was also a light red and represented the moon.

<sup>1</sup>*Mai'putsidi*, species of *solidago*.



At o I burned incense of the short broad-leaved sage we use in the sweatlodge. I also used a split stick for tongs; when it was burned by use, I cut a new one. I burned this incense of broad-leaved sage, morning and evening; in the morning, either before or after breakfast, but in the evening always after supper, about sunset. Burning incense here at o so often, caused an accumulation of charcoal and half burned sage. The sage for the incense was kept at p (Fig. 9).

At n also, where the yellow top incense was burned, charcoal and half burned plants accumulated; and near n, at q, was a flat piece of wood on which were emptied the ashes from the pipes smoked. Here also lay our two pipes when not in use. One of these pipes was used by the men on one side of the lodge (east) and one by the men on the other side (west) (Fig. 9).

When the half burned incense plants had accumulated where they were burnt and ashes had collected in the fireplace, Small-ankle would say, "Clean up the ashes!" I then carried the ashes from the fireplace and the half burned incense sage from my burning place and cast them outside the door at e (Fig. 9). Good-shooter also carried out the half burned yellow top and ashes from his place of burning, but he did not carry out the ashes of the pipes from the flat board. He deposited the half burned yellow top at e.

I have said that the dirt from the digging of the fireplace was dropped by the door at e. The door of the eagle hunting lodge was never opened from the left side either when one of the hunters came in or when he went out (although in an earthlodge the hanging door was always lifted on this side), except when an eagle was caught. When an eagle was brought into the lodge the door was opened on the left; but even then it was so opened for the eagle only; the hunter himself did not enter thus.

It was forbidden women to enter the eagle hunting lodge. When they brought food they set it on the ground before the door and called out, "I bring food!" As the servant of the lodge I went out and brought the food in, setting it before the place where I burned incense, at r (Fig. 9).

The sides of a deer, let us say, had been cut up, boiled, and as above explained, I had carried them into the lodge. Good-shooter then came and I handed him a small stick twice as long as a lead pencil. With this he skewered one piece of meat and thrust the stick with the meat on it, into the wall above my bed, saying, "There, Íxtaki is your food!" This was a ceremonial offering and not meant to be eaten. I then distributed the rest of the meat.

We did not bring our carved wooden bowls into the eagle hunters' lodge. As a hunter went in the woods, he looked for a large, wide chip of wood; if he found none, he sought a piece of a trunk or a log, easy to split, and cut a wide chip out of it. This chip he brought into the lodge to use as a dish or trencher. In my father's camp we split up an elm log; each man was given a chip or wooden slab as his eating dish, or trencher. When the food was brought by the women to the hunters' lodge, I took it inside and set it at r (Fig. 9), as described. After Good-shooter had skewered a piece for me, I distributed the rest to the company, laying the pieces on their trenchers. The distribution was in a prescribed order (Fig. 9).

First I gave my father his food, because he was leader. I next served Short-bull at i; then Broom at j; then Good-shooter at g; his helper at l, and Big-bull at s; then in order, t, u, v, w, and x. (I do not recollect the order of the beds after Big-bull's, but as none of these belonged to officers I have assigned one of these to each of the non-office-holding members, to avoid confusion in my narrative.)

There was a prescribed way for me to deliver the food. I started from r, and walking between the east-lying snake stick and the row of waiting men, with the kettle in my hand, I came to Small-ankle; I placed his portion of food on the trencher that lay ready at his feet. In the same way, I served the men at i and j, and placed food on my own trencher.

I now passed to the other side, walking, kettle in hand, between the snake stick on the west and the line of waiting men and I served in order, g, l, s, t, u, v, w, and x. I returned the emptied kettle to its place at r. We now ate. When we had finished, I returned the kettle to the women in their camp.

As will be noted, I was careful to walk outside the snake sticks. We held these and the fireplace sacred and avoided touching them, or walking between them.

After their meal, the company often smoked, Good-shooter lighting the pipes.

*Stick-and-Calico Offerings to the Eagles.* We had returned from our evening meal at the women's camp, and Small-ankle had just appointed Packs-moccasin to be Good-shooter. "İxtaki," my father said to me, "go out with your butcher knife and bring in some June berry shoots, about the size of arrow-shafts, to make offerings."

In the woods outside I cut about twenty June berry sticks of the diameter of arrow sticks and the length of my arm. "Lay them here,"

said Small-ankle. I laid them on the ground at his feet at h, between him and the snake pillow. He arose, took his sacred objects from the buffalo skull and laid them at y. He opened the sacred bundle, took out a piece of black medicine, chewed it, blew it over his hands, and rubbed it over his body. He blew the medicine over the sticks also.

He opened a small sack filled with brightly colored pieces of calico, drew out a piece, and tore off several strips each about two inches wide. He tied each strip to one end of a stick, so that the bit of calico hung down like a little flag or streamer. As he finished each stick he laid it down on the floor beside him. "Now," he said, "I give each of you some of these sticks. Take them outside and while I sing, offer them to the eagles. Good-shooter, you are first!"

Good-shooter arose from his place. Walking between the west snake stick and the wall, toward the lodge door, he crossed in front of the door, and walking on the east side of the snake stick on that side of the lodge, he came to my father, who gave him some of the sticks with the calico streamers. I do not know how many sticks he gave him.

He returned, and his helper was called, and then, in order, all on the west side of the lodge. Then Short-bull, Broom, and I were called, each getting, as I remember, two of the sticks.

"When you offer these sticks," said my father, you must say, "Young golden eagle, you who have full power, receive my offering." Come straight to this place and make yourself like something knowing nothing [i. e., do not observe the pit, be ignorant that we have any bad intention against you]. Do this as you offer the first stick. Then do likewise with the next stick, except that you offer it to any other bird you may hope to catch, as a spotted golden eagle, a young white-headed eagle, or any other, which you should address.

When you are ready to give the offering, look upward and cry '*Hi-hē+*.' "These vocables should precede your words each time." (The expression *Hi-hē+* meant Lo, or Behold, and was commonly used when one was about to address the gods.)

While Small-ankle remained within, singing and shaking a rattle in each hand, we went out, Good-shooter leading, and all the others following in order; last of all was myself.

As Small-ankle sang, Good-shooter prayed as instructed. The rest of us stood in line, just east of the lodge, facing it, or westward. The hill prevented us from taking a position opposite the center of the lodge. As Good-shooter prayed, he held up his stick offering toward the west. When his prayer was ended, he laid the stick offering on the ground at



his feet. Calling 'Hi-hē+', he made a second offering, naming the kind of eagle he wished to take. So he made three or four prayers, one for each stick offering.

Each in turn, the others made offerings likewise, myself being the last.

All the sticks with calico streamers now lay on the ground, each man's at his feet; we were all still standing in a line as at the first. Good-shooter now called to Small-ankle, "We have ended our prayers." Small-ankle stopped singing.

Good-shooter led the way into the lodge, all following in order, myself last; each stooped and picked up his sticks as he started. Walking east of the snake stick at the east, Good-shooter advanced and stopped before Small-ankle. The rest of us handed Good-shooter our sticks, each in order; he received them in his arms.

"Now, Good-shooter," said Small-ankle, "go and stand the sticks in the ground." Good-shooter did so. Beginning at the left he thrust the sticks into the ground in a line before the buffalo skull, leaving a little open space just in front of the skull. The cloths of different colors bound to the tops of the sticks hung down like streamers. The stick offerings are indicated in Fig. 9 by the row of little lines in front of the buffalo skull, with a little open space in the center.

Good-shooter returned to his place, going back and crossing before the door as before, for it was not permitted to walk between the skull and the fire pit.

"Īxtaki," called Small-ankle, "get me two plants of the tall sage with seeds on the top." I knew where some of this sage grew, for I had marked the place before dark. I went out and brought two plants as directed, carrying them in my left hand. I handed them to Small-ankle.

"Fetch some coals," said Small-ankle. I brought some from the fire with my split stick, approaching the fireplace from the door side of the lodge, of course. I laid the coals by Small-ankle at y (Fig. 9). Small-ankle burned some broad-leafed sage (not the seed-bearing kind) on them for incense, and holding the two sage plants in the smoke, he said to them, "I am going to use you for my snare sticks. Try to catch many eagles for us."

"Īxtaki," he called, "fetch a little water in a cup." I went out to the women's camp, got a cup, and brought a little water. Small-ankle opened his paint bag, poured a little paint into the cup to mix with the water, and with this painted the two sage plants red. He arose and stuck the two plants in the ground before the skull (Fig. 9), one at each side of it, and in the line of offering sticks.

Small-ankle returned to his sacred bundle again and drew from it a snare (or noose). "I will now paint my snare," he said. The snare was of native hemp, about the thickness of a bowstring and twice as long, or say, ten feet in length. It was merely a long line with a noose at the end. Small-ankle painted it by looping it back and forth into a loose bunch and drawing it through his hand that had been moistened with red paint. At short intervals on the snare, were tied bits of soft pure-white feathers, the kind found under an eagle's tail or on its legs.

Small-ankle laid the snare on his sacred objects. "Fill the pipe, Good-shooter," he called. Good-shooter did as he was bidden, and crossing the room in front of the door he gave the pipe to Small-ankle who said, "This we are now doing is very dangerous. Without this snare we should get in great hurt (sic). These birds have power to take away our spirits, so that one will die quickly. But I have a helper here, Short-bull. If my snare and I are not strong enough [i.e., in mystery power] Short-bull will help me and I am sure everything will be favorable. But be sure, all of you, to obey orders carefully."

Small-ankle had meanwhile passed the pipe. All the men on his side of the lodge smoked. I remember that all the men on the other side were smoking also, for Good-shooter had also lighted the other pipe.

The pipe having been smoked out, it was returned to Small-ankle who passed it to Short-bull, he to Broom, and Broom to me. I carried it across to Worn-out (Fig. 9) and so it was passed along the line to Good-shooter, who emptied the ashes and returned the pipe to its place.

Small-ankle opened his bundle and took out a short snare of native hemp about two feet long, on which were tied a bunch of black bear's hair and a flint arrow-head. He threw the noose over his head like a necklace, the flint arrow-head and the bear's hair hanging down on his breast. The snare cord was about the thickness of one's little finger.

Small-ankle knelt beside his bundle, facing the sagebrush at z (Fig. 9). He opened the noose of the long snare to the diameter of about a foot, passing the free end under his necklace snare and over his right shoulder. "There, Short-bull," he called, "hold that end. I want to get this part of the ceremony just right. If I do not, you won't catch anything. So put your wishes on it (sic). You are my helper and you must aid me."

Holding the noose of the long snare open with his hands which he held out toward the sagebrush plants, he made motions as if he would throw the snare over the sagebrush as he sang:—

"O black bear, let us walk (go?)  
We see something;  
We see a snare as we go along."

The song ended, Small-ankle threw the noose. It fell, catching the branches of both sagebrush plants at once, so that it hung down, open, upon the two plants. "Good," cried everybody in the lodge, for this was a sign that we might expect a good hunt. The sign would have been unlucky if the noose had fallen short or passed beyond the sagebrush plants.

All now prayed to the leader, Small-ankle, "I want to catch many eagles! Let me catch many eagles!"

Small-ankle lifted the snare and put it back in his sacred bundle. He untied his necklace snare and returned it also to his sacred bundle, which he tied up and laid again on the buffalo skull.

"I want to tell you a short story," he said, as he took his seat.

*Myth of the Black Bears.* In the old days, the black bears liked to catch eagles. A black bear would go into his pit and when he saw an eagle in the air, he would take out his snare and motion with it as if to ensnare the bird. Although he could not reach the eagle, the latter soon began to fly down to the pit as if compelled to do so by some power.

At that time, as now, the Missouri River divided this country into two parts. The north side belonged to the black bears; the south side of the river belonged to the yellow bears. These latter were also black bears, as white men call them, but their fur was yellow, while the fur of the others was black. Neither the yellow nor the black bears entered the country of the others. Each had its own hunting grounds and dwelling places. The yellow bears had an eagle hunting lodge at the hill called White Lodge, where they lived and caught eagles and ate them.

*Plans for marking the Pits.* "Tomorrow," continued Small-ankle, "I will mark your pit for each of you. Each select the hill on which you will put your pit. You all know what kind of a place to choose. We will all go mounted and I will go around and mark each pit."

One of the party, I think it was Mussel-shell, said, "Old-male-black-bear (thus the leader of the hunt was called) I have already selected the place for my pit. It is at that high pointed hill on the plain. I did not bring my blue blanket with me; but when I return home I will give it to you for marking my pit."

"That is good," said Small-ankle. "All of you know that each should pay me something, since this is sacred work. This blue blanket is too much to pay for the work; give me a knife, a dish, or something. However, as this man can afford to pay me the blanket, he may do so. The others may give me less valuable gifts."

*Story Telling and Ceremonies.* The evening had been consumed by the events above related. We were able to perform all the ceremonies



described by the light of the fire, which it was my duty to keep replenished. I used any dry wood for the fire except diamond willows, which crackle and throw out sparks, thus endangering clothing and bedding. The women of the camp kept up the wood pile which was heaped up loosely just outside, at the right of the door. I fetched in an armful as required. The night was dark, the sky cloudy, and the air cool, but not cold.

Before Small-ankle thought it time to go to bed, Good-shooter said, "Old-male-black-bear, we want you to tell us a story." And he filled a pipe and laid it beside the leader. Evening was the time for story telling. Small-ankle sat up, for it was a rule that all should be sitting when a story was being told.

"I will tell a story," said Small-ankle, "but you must not lie down but sit up. Each of you represents a hill standing up against the west. When an eagle comes from the west, it does not fly over the hill but stops there, halted by the hill! So do not go to bed until my story is ended." He told, I think, four stories, until quite late.

I think the first of these stories was the origin of the black bear ceremony.<sup>1</sup> He also told how the eagles' path, or route, as they make their fall journey to the south passes the mouth of the Yellowstone. "They pass a hill called White Lodge and cross Knife River at a place that the black bears called Póxaka-ati tadútie, or Sand-lodge plain. At this place is a sand plain which abuts on a range of hills rising in the west. From Sand-lodge plain the eagles pass on to a bend of Heart River, or the point of a tongue of land which juts into the bend. This big bend is called 'Heart River' in the eagle-pit language."

Small-ankle also told the story of the origin of the ceremony; how he bought the ceremony from Spear-head-earring, and he from White-finger-nails.

The story telling took a long time. The men listened, sitting a little back of the snake sticks on either side, and all facing the fire. They sat rather close to the wall, some on blankets; their beds were still rolled up. They listened, asking Small-ankle no questions; however he explained everything. Nor did they ask questions afterwards. It was the rule of the eagle hunt that the leader should be obeyed implicitly.

I remember, as the story telling went on, some of the men would get sleepy and nodded. Good-shooter then took a split green stick he used for tongs, and approaching a dozing man, caught hold of a bit of the flesh of arm or leg in the split and give a twist, waking the man. The

---

<sup>1</sup>Pepper, George H. and Wilson, Gilbert L. "An Hidatsa Shrine and the Beliefs Respecting It" (*Memoirs, American Anthropological Association*, vol. 2, pp. 257-328, 1908), 306-316.

split stick was applied to other parts of the body if Good-shooter chose, either on the bare flesh, or through the clothes.

When my father finished his tales, he lighted the pipe and held it toward the buffalo skull and the objects upon it. The skull was called Xiě-á'pa-ádatsi'ta, Old-ears-backwards or Old-one-whose-ears-hang-backwards and was used as a shrine, or sacred object, because, in the beginning, when the black bears gave a ceremony, the leaders were always buffaloes who gave themselves to be used for food by the [human] people, a kind of present to the people from the black bears.

Small-ankle passed the pipe around and the company smoked in turn; but not I, for my father thought I was too young. I never smoked when I was young; now that I am old I am a great smoker. Sometimes men have tried to out-smoke me, but I beat them all! I think some of them nearly died trying to beat me smoking! (laughing).

I was but a lad then. Broom and I were on our first eagle hunt. Most of the other men were between twenty and thirty. Small-ankle was about sixty, I think.

"And now let us stretch ourselves," said Small-ankle, meaning that we should go to bed. I had been excused by my father about midnight, and had lain down behind him.

*Robes.* We went to bed, but as yet we had no grass for our bedding. We spread robes and saddleskins and slept with our clothing on. Some of the party had robes, some blankets. The sleeper did not belt his robe about him at night, but lay in it as he wore it.

A Hidatsa wore his robe with the tail end folded over his front from the right, first; then the head end folded over from the left. I can imagine but one reason why the head of the robe was outside; this was because the belt bound around it, supported it so it would not slip down. If the tail end were outside, the head was apt to slip. Then, as the left arm was used to support the robe, it gave the wearer a better purchase upon it to have the tail end or long-leg end on that side as the robe here was wider. Also, the head, folded well over to the right, with the ears often ornamented with fringe or little skin tassels, looked pretty as one walked. This method of wearing a robe is very ancient. If a man were seen walking with his robe folded with the head over from the right people would laugh and say, "What is the matter with that man? Look, he wears his robe so!" But if a man were left handed, he reversed these positions, folding the head of his robe over from the right, yet drawing it uppermost.

*Grass Pillows and Bedding.* This first night in the lodge, as I have said, we had no grass for our beds. However, the day after, each of us bound up a bundle of grass as a pillow and laid it against the snake stick and we laid loose dry grass on the floor for bedding. Although forbidden to touch the snake stick in the daytime, we had no fear if we touched it with our heads at night. Fig. 10a shows the grass pillow laid in place against the snake stick; the drawing is by Goodbird who has seen these grass pillows used by a hunting party.

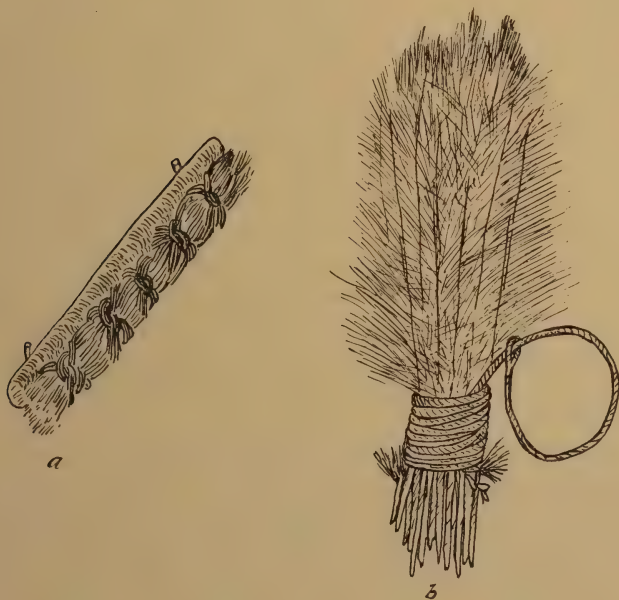


Fig. 10. *a*, A Grass' Pillow shown in Position against the Snake Stick; *b*, A Bunch of White Eagle Feathers and Snare.

*Breakfast and Preparations.* Small-ankle was first to awake the next morning. "Daylight, boys," he called, "get up!" I arose and replenished the fire which I kindled from coals in the ashes. We had started the fire the day before with flint and steel, which several possessed; one of the party had matches, but had gotten them wet. My father had brought tinder with him, bits of puff ball, perhaps a double handful in all. The puff ball was gathered ripe, dried, rubbed with wet gunpowder and dried. It caught fire easily and was applied to a handful of dry grass.



When the fire was burning all arose. It was about sunrise and we heard the voices of the women calling outside, "We bring you food."

Several of the party now said to my father, "Old-male-black-bear, I want you to mark my pit; when I get back to the village I will give you such-and-such for pay." The gift was a gun, a blanket, or some other article. Marking the pit was a sacred ceremony and the men feared to do it themselves.

I have related how the night before a piece of venison for Íxtaki was put on a stick by Good-shooter and the stick thrust into the wall by the snare over my bed. Only Good-shooter had the right to do this. While the men were promising gifts to Small-ankle I went to the stick, struck it smartly so that the bit of venison fell down, and cried, "You defecate!" So it was our custom to do, and thus Íxtaki got his food.

I now carried in the food which the women had brought: a kettle of mixed corn-and-squash, boiled, and boiled dried meat. I passed the meat to Old-male-black-bear, then to Short-bull and Broom, and put my share at my place; I next served Good-shooter and the others in their turn.

One of the men called to me, "Íxtaki, bring all the bowls in the women's camp. These chips [trenchers] are not good to put squash and corn in." I fetched the bowls and distributed them, first to Old-male-black-bear and the men on his side of the lodge, then to those on Good-shooter's side of the lodge.

Old-male-black-bear broke off a small piece of meat; holding it toward his sacred bundle, he said, "Black bear, here, eat!" He tossed the meat into the fire. One after another, he named his other gods, each time tossing a bit of meat into the fire. Last of all he said, "Pit, you eat. I feed you! Now I ask you to help us all you can. We are here for eagles; we want you to cause them to come here. Work hard and help us!"

Meanwhile the rest of us were eating. When our meal was ended Good-shooter said, "You, Old-bear and No-first-finger, go out into the hills and bring in the horses." The two men went out. While they were gone I gathered up the bowls and kettles and returned them to the women's camp.

Our horses had been in the hills all night, about four hundred yards away, hobbled near a brook. When the herd was brought in, each man saddled his mount. There were all varieties of saddles, deer-horn, wooden, and flat. When all were ready, Small-ankle said, "Big-bull, enemies might come in our absence. You stay with these two boys, Broom and my son, and guard the women."

The rest set out on their mounts, taking their knives and hoes with them. There were, I think, five hoes in the party. Both knives and hoes were to be used in digging the pits. "You are to work in pairs," Small-ankle had said, "thus helping one another. I, too, will help, and when my turn comes, one of you help me, for digging is hard work!"

*Pit Sites are Selected.* The men returned in the evening, now one, now two, and each told of the site he had selected for a pit. This might be on the top of some height or on some western slope. If a hill were found rising to a height and overlooking a flat prairie on the west, a pit might be dug at the bottom; or if there were a bench halfway or part way up the hill, the pit might be dug there. If there were a creek or stretch of woods at the bottom, making it impossible to locate a pit there, it might be put on the top of the hill. "I have not finished my pit yet," each said, "but I have dug in it."

As night approached, we ate, listened to some stories by Small-ankle or Old-male-black-bear, as we called him, and slept.

Thus five days passed, before the pits were finished. As each pit was finished, Old-male-black-bear fixed<sup>1</sup> the cover frame, made of buckbrush and grass, the owner paying him for the work.

*Hunting Meat for Bait.* On the fifth day, Old-bull was sent out to hunt meat. He went on horseback, with his gun. He returned about nine in the evening, after the others had gotten in. They learned at once that he had much meat for he had killed buffalo. "Where did you get it?" they cried, and were much astonished. "A big herd is coming this way from the Yellowstone River," said Big-bull. "Good," cried all the others. "The black bears have sent the buffalo to us. It is a good sign. May they also send us eagles."

"Tomorrow," said Small-ankle, "let everybody go hunting and kill something for bait; a jack rabbit, kit-fox, duck, prairie-chicken, prairie-dog, or badger.<sup>2</sup> All these make good bait. If you cannot get these, the flesh on the front quarters of a deer or buffalo, or on the ribs, with the white fat attached, is good."

Two of the men said they did not have to go, having brought bait with them. One had a jack rabbit skin, the other a foxskin. Such a foxskin or rabbitskin<sup>3</sup> was removed whole from the hind legs forward, and

---

<sup>1</sup>It does not appear whether Small-ankle "fixed" the frame ceremonially or actually made it.—G. L. W.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. with the description of the bait used in the eagle hunt without ceremonies where pieces of meat and not the whole animal are used. The former is in partial agreement with a statement made for the Mandan by Maximilian (vol. 2, 348) who says that pieces of meat were laid on the pit cover and a crow or other bird fastened to it to attract attention.

<sup>3</sup>The Arapaho sometimes set a stuffed coyote skin near the bait (Kroeber, A. L., "*The Arapaho*", *Bulletin, American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 18, 22.) Curtis (vol. 5, 88) records an Arikara myth in which eagle trapping is described at some length. Here Red Wolf who is hunting eagles uses for bait a stuffed deer hide to which fresh meat has been fastened at the shoulders.

while still green was stuffed with deer or antelope hair. When the skin had dried, the stuffing was removed, and the skin twisted and worked with the hands to soften it, when it was put away. If needed for the hunt, it could be stuffed with hair again.

Most of our party hunted the next morning, returning toward evening with various kinds of bait, but the greater number with jack rabbits.

*Piercing the Bait.* "Now," said Small-ankle, "I must open my sacred bundle and get my snares." He opened the bundle and took out a bunch of small white eagle feathers. When unrolled these proved to be several smaller bunches of the feathers with a snare tied to each (Fig. 10b). The snare had an open noose and was made of the bark of a weed, snare-in-the-wood, or Indian hemp. He next took out a considerable-sized bunch of bait snares. These were simply cords, each with a noose painted red. The cord was about as thick as one's little finger and four or five feet long.<sup>1</sup>

"Now," said Small-ankle, "if you want me to pierce a hole through your bait I will do so; but you must pay me for it." "We all want you to do so," they said. "Íxtaki," said my father, "Go out and cut some June berry sticks, the size of my thumb and as long as my arm [two and a half feet]." I went out and cut about a dozen sticks, brought them in, and laid them before Small-ankle, near the snake pillow at the head of his bed. "Go and get sage," said my father. I fetched in a handful of broad-leafed sage. "Bring me some coals," said my father.

I did so, placing the coals at y (Fig. 9). Small-ankle laid the sage on the coals and held the sticks in the smoke. With his knife he peeled all the bark from the sticks, except a little left as a knob at one end of each; the other end he sharpened.

He had bidden the men bring their bait, which they piled at his right, just behind the snake stick. "Now," said Small-ankle, "I will decorate the snake pillows." He painted a bunch of sage red, took two buckskin thongs, arose and starting from his seat at\*, (Fig. 9h) he followed the route indicated by the broken line to \*\* and stood, facing the pit while he sang the snake song. I have forgotten the words. Then he walked to the place behind the pipe (Fig. 9 at \*\*\*) and tied one bunch of sage about the head of the log, the plants (with the tops projecting forward) covering the end. Retracing his steps to \*\* he walked as indicated by the broken line to the end of the other snake stick at \*\* and decorated it.

---

<sup>1</sup>Goodbird does not always distinguish between "cord" and "thong." The bait snare cord was probably a thong; see Wolf-chief's account, p. 129.—G. L. W.



"Now, Íxtaki," he called, "tomorrow, get some stakes, sharpen them, and drive them into the ground in front of those snake sticks so that they will not roll into the fire, nor roll too close to it, and thus get too warm!"

*Thrusting Sticks in the Bait.* Small-ankle laid the bait sticks before him in a row, with the points forward; the bait lay at his right. He took up a prairie-chicken, burned sage incense, and held the prairie-chicken in the smoke while he sang: "Pack the bait!" Thus he addressed the other men, who must carry their bait to their pits.

Small-ankle lifted a bait stick and thrust it upward through the prairie-chicken's entrails, the point emerging at the neck. To either end of the stick he tied a native-hemp cord, making a carrying cord for passing over the hunter's shoulders so that he could carry the bait. The owner of the prairie-chicken rose and Small-ankle handed it to him, saying, "Take it outside and hang it on the lodge." The same ceremonies were repeated for all the bait; at last all hung outside on the lodge. "The bait is now hung," said Small-ankle, "and I must sing another song."

At his order, I fetched coals and on these laid sage. Small-ankle took out his two rattles. They were of buffalo skin, flat at the top like those used in the sun dance. Small-ankle held them in the smoke, shaking them, and hitting them together once or twice. "Now is the time," he said, "to sing the bait song." And again he sang: "Pack the bait!" When he had finished singing he cried, "The black bear's horse says, 'I am magic; therefore the eagles will seat themselves upon me.'" Small-ankle referred to the bait upon which the eagle alighted. In eagle-hunt language the wolf was a black bear's horse. If we saw one we said, "We have seen a black bear's horse today."

Small-ankle now cried, "The fox bait says, 'I am magic, therefore eagles will sit upon me.'" Then, "The kitfox says, 'I am magic, therefore eagles will sit upon me!'" Last of all he cried, "Old buffalo meat from the ribs, (*apq'dupáta*) says, 'I am magic, so that eagles sit upon me!'"

Naming the four kinds of bait in this order was an ancient custom.

*The Snare and Pipe.* Small-ankle now took the long snare, the one he had thrown over the two sage bushes, from his medicine bag, put on his snare necklace, passed the long end of the longer snare under the snare necklace and over his right shoulder, and bade Short-bull hold it. Small-ankle opened the noose with his hands, and as he knelt, cast the noose; it fell hanging on the two sage bushes. This was a good omen and all were glad. "Loosen the end." Small-ankle cried to Short-bull, who did so.

Small-ankle drew the end out from under the necklace and extended the long cord upon the top of the eastern row of stick offerings, coiling the unused end on the ground beside the easternmost of the stick offerings (at right as Indians calculate, see Fig. 9). He opened the paint bag he kept in his medicine bundle, and still wearing his sacred snare necklace (for there were evil spirits that might harm him), he painted his face red and chewed up some black medicine which he blew into his hands and rubbed over his body. This also was to ward off evil influences.

He took his two rattles, burned incense, held the rattles in the smoke, and sat down on his robe, on his heels as Indians often sit. "Good-shooter," he said, "fill my pipe and lay it before me." This was done, and Small-ankle began to sing, shaking his rattles. He sang four songs; one I remember was the wind song:—

"Hútsi	midö'kata	xakáduwě."
Wind	to-leeward	keep-going

*Midö'kata* means the direction in which the wind blows away from the speaker. After each song, Small-ankle, still shaking his rattles, made a sacred speech, in each case exactly the same, and preceded by the vocables *ha-hö' + -hě*, thus:—

"Ha-hö' + -hě! My friends, the black bear has placed his lodge here. He will make this door, which does not open on the left side, open very often. Ha-hö' -hě! The black bear has fixed his lodge in this round (clump of) timber. The trees will keep shaking, shaking and never stop!"

After the sacred speech, Small-ankle prayed, "I wish my young men to catch many eagles. I wish that tomorrow a wind may come from the west."

Thus Small-ankle sang four times, spoke the sacred speech, and prayed. Before singing, he had called Good-shooter to bring him a pipe, which Good-shooter filled and laid before my father. When the latter had ended his four songs, he put away his rattles, bade me bring him coals, lighted the pipe, held it toward the sacred bundle, smoked, and then held it toward Good-shooter whom he had called to come and stand before him. In our various tribal ceremonies, the leader or chief officer, often smoked thus and then held the pipe for his friends to smoke instead of passing it around.

Good-shooter having smoked, Small-ankle smoked again, and handed the pipe to Short-bull. It was then passed to me. I took it across to Worn-out, the man at x, Fig. 9, who passed it up the line to Good-shooter. He smoked and passed the pipe down the line again so

that it exactly retraced its course, until it reached Small-ankle, who had now taken his seat. The pipe in its return to Small-ankle was passed to the left, and each man smoked as it went by. I took the pipe from Worn-out and carried it across in front of the door to the east side of the lodge.

When exhausted the pipe was passed back to Good-shooter, who emptied the ashes at n, (Fig. 9) and re-filled the bowl. Walking northward, but west of the snake stick, Good-shooter advanced toward the door, crossed in front of it, walked southward and east of the eastern snake stick and placed the newly filled pipe before Small-ankle. As usual, he was careful not to pass between the skull and the pit.

Thus Small-ankle sang four times, each time singing four songs, and following each song with a sacred speech and prayer. At the end of every series of four songs, he lighted and passed the pipe. He shook his rattles while praying and speaking. While he was singing Small-ankle's medicine objects were spread in a row before him. The members of the party sat, quietly and respectfully.

It was quite late when the ceremony ended and we went to bed, or stretched ourselves, as we said.

*The Morning Fire.* One of the men arose at daybreak, and went out, I think, to the top of a hill. "Get up friends," he called, when he returned, "there is a very good wind blowing" (i.e., a wind from the west). While I attended to the fire several others went out, saying on their return, "It is a good wind."

To make the morning fire, I kept dry grass and twigs ready near my bed. Raking coals from the ashes I put on the grass and twigs, blowing on them Indian-fashion with my lips pursed somewhat flatly, not rounded, as white men do.

*Preparing to go to the Pits.* Small-ankle arose, put on his snare necklace, and held his rattles in the smoke of incense he now burned. He seated himself again and twice sang a song, the words of which I do not now remember.

The men began to make ready to go to their pits. They put grass into their moccasins to protect them from the cold of the pits and tied their belts over their robes or blankets. They ate no breakfast, for they must fast, when about to go to the pits. "All you young men come here and stand before me in a line," called Small-ankle, when all were ready.

They moved down the line and stood before the door facing the fire pit (Fig. 8c), where the men at g, l, s, t, etc., moved to g', l', s', t', etc.



"Now," said Small-ankle, addressing the man at x', "Bring me your bait." The man addressed, brought in his bait from outside the lodge. "Bring it here," said Small-ankle and he burned incense, holding the bait in the smoke.

From the bunch of snares described as bound together and looking like feathers, Small-ankle drew one out and gave it to the man with his bait, saying, "When you see any eagles flying over head, toss this snare into the air and draw it back as if drawing down a bird. The eagle will soon come down, for the snare has such power.

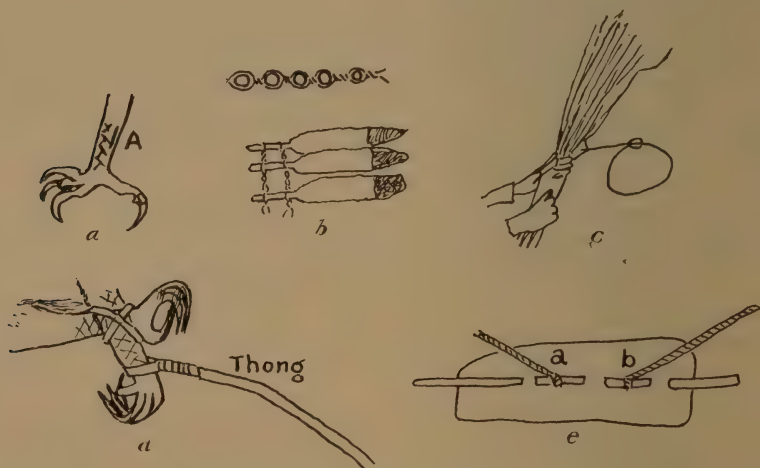


Fig. 11. *a*, Sketch of an Eagle's Talons. At A is the tendon which is bitten through if the eagle should sink its talons into a hunter; *b*, Technique for weaving Eagle Tail Feathers into a Fan with Sinew; *c*, Manner of holding the Eagle Feathers and Snare; *d*, Method of tying Thong to the Foot of a Captured Eagle; *e*, Method of skewering Meat and attaching the Thongs for swinging the Meat over the Fire.

Some of these snares had quite a bunch of feathers bound to them, while some had but two or three feathers. Each time the holder of the snare had caught an eagle, he pulled out one of the soft feathers, and tied it to the snare. They were painted red and each had a bit of black medicine tied to it.

"If the eagle fights or scratches you," said my father, "or wounds your hand, take a bit of this black medicine, chew it, blow it over the wound, and you will receive no serious hurt."

Sometimes hunters were hurt by the eagles. The birds have long sharp talons. Once, so runs a story, an eagle caught a man's right hand,

driving its talons quite through. The man could not open the talons, so he killed the eagle; but still it held him. The hunter came out of his pit and yelled. Another hunter came to his rescue. "Yes," said the latter, "I have heard that even after death, an eagle still clings fast with its talons. I have heard there is but one remedy." The man bit the eagle's tendon with his teeth (Fig. 11a) and though dead, the eagle opened its talons.<sup>1</sup>

Small-ankle continued to speak to the men as they stood before him with their bait: "When you catch a real eagle,<sup>2</sup> that is, a young golden eagle, as soon as you get out of your pit, you must begin to mourn and cry like one in sorrow and do not stop crying until you get to the door of this lodge. While you are still outside, *Íxtaki* will ask, 'What kind is it, friend?' and you must answer, 'A young one,' if it is a young golden eagle. If it is an old spotted golden eagle, answer, 'One with four spots.' If it is a white-headed eagle, an old one, answer, 'Both ends white', meaning the eagle's head and tail. If it is a young white-headed eagle, answer, 'One with some spots left yet,' meaning the spots on the white-headed eagle's tail. "But," continued Small-ankle, "if the eagle is an old golden eagle, stop crying as you approach within one or two hundred yards of the lodge. Also, if you have caught a white-headed eagle, young or old, stop crying some distance from the lodge. But for a young golden eagle, mourn until you arrive at the lodge."

As he handed his bait back to each man, Small-ankle said, "As you receive your bait, go at once to your pit. Each received his bait in order (Fig. 8c). Short-bull was the last to receive his bait and left as had the others.

Small-ankle himself did not leave the lodge. "I will wait," he said, "and if any of my young men catch an eagle, I will take it out and tie it beside my bait at the pit so that other eagles will alight." Broom and I did not go, nor did Big-bull who had rheumatism in his hip and therefore did not dare lie on the ground as long as would be necessary in the eagle pit. "I will not hunt eagles," he said, "I will hunt game."

We who did not go to the pits did not have to fast and Small-ankle, Big-bull, Broom, and I sat down to our breakfast.

*Making the Beds.* After we had eaten, Small-ankle got out his rattles. "Bring me coals," he said. Laying sage upon them, he held his rattles in the smoke and sang a song:—

---

<sup>1</sup>Curtis, Edward S., (*The North American Indian*, vol. 4, 1909), gives us a confirmatory statement on this point: "If a bird fought for freedom and fastened its talons in the hunter's wrist, he knew where to press the tendons of its legs to compel it to release its hold." (137).

<sup>2</sup>Writing of animals sacred to the Mandan, Will and Spinden (136) state: "The war-eagle was considered as having great medicine power and they kept all sorts of birds of prey alive in the huts for their plumes."

“If you want to walk (go),  
You shall walk (go).  
You walk (go) as if to the female land.”

And again he prayed, “I want all my young men to catch many eagles and bring them to this lodge.”

Then he said to me, “Let us, you, Broom, and I, go down to the creek where the blue grass grows, and cut some for our beds.” We did so. As my father cut the grass, we boys filled our spread-out blankets and carrying them to the lodge, slung over our backs and held by the four corners, we emptied them just outside the lodge door, on the east, or right side. We Hidatsa thought of a lodge as a living person; if the door faced the north, the east side was the right side of the lodge. We thus emptied our blankets, I think, three times. “We have enough now,” we said to Small-ankle. “All right,” he answered, “let us return.” We boys had helped some in the cutting. I would seize a bunch of grass in my hand, and cut it off with my knife. As it was fall, the grass was brown.

We entered the lodge, Small-ankle bound the grass with thongs in two long rolls, like pillows, one of which lay just inside each of the two snake sticks (Fig. 10a). We also spread grass evenly over the floor of the beds, like a mattress, and quite to the rear to the wall.

“Now,” said Small-ankle, “if you want to spit, do not spit into the fire. Spit only between the snake stick and the grass pillow, which latter roll away for the purpose.”

*Rules respecting Women.* Ordinarily women were not permitted in an eagle hunter's lodge, for the black bears when they first taught the eagle ceremonies to the Indians, said, “When a man is hunting eagles he must not touch a woman; if he does, some harm will come upon him. The eagle he catches will hurt him, or some other injury will come to him.”

Eagle hunters therefore avoided women, husbands kept away from their wives; for if they slept with their wives they knew harm would come to them.<sup>1</sup> A menstruating woman could enter the hunters' lodge and proceed as follows:—

The diagram (Fig. 8d) represents the pit and snake sticks in an eagle hunter's lodge. When a woman in the camp was menstruating she sent word to the hunters' lodge, it might be in the day or in the night. The leader of the hunt put coals at the four corners of the pit (Fig. 8d),

---

<sup>1</sup>See also Matthews, *ibid.*, 59, who states that women were forbidden the ceremonial lodge though they might bring food and water.



a, b, c, and d in the order named. He rolled short seedless sage in his palms, making four balls and laid each on the coals, at (Fig. 8d) a, b, c, and d, and in the order named. The woman was called in. As she came forward she threw her robe over her head and inhaled the smoke at a, b, c, and d in the order named. As she did so the leader got his rattles and sang, "I have painted it red," meaning the sage balls, which he had painted red, and he made motions with the rattles as if casting a snare. When these ceremonies with the menstruating woman were performed, we felt sure that many eagles would be caught.

*The Wailing Custom.* I have spoken of the custom of crying and wailing, as one brought in an eagle to the lodge. I will tell how I did this, so that you may have an account of my own experience. When I brought in an eagle under my arm I cried, "This is a great god under my arm. I have little power. I wish this god would help me get many eagles. Help me, god. I am weak and unable to help myself!" As I cried, my tears ran down a little bit. Then they would dry up and I would cry again and again my tears would run. And so until I got to the lodge.

When a man was about to go to war, if he wanted to fast and cry, he sometimes took his sacred object or objects in his arm and cried and mourned and let his tears fall on the sacred bundle. He would say, "My tears fall on you as I mourn and fast. Now I want you to help me get what I want. I want to strike the enemy and get honor marks, to be safe myself and not get killed."

*The First Eagle.* It was about three o'clock in the afternoon and I was in the lodge with Small-ankle who was sound asleep, when I heard someone calling outside. It was one of the women, who said, "I heard someone crying over the hill." I wakened my father and told him. We went outside and listened. "It is one of our men," said my father, "He has caught an eagle. You women hasten into your tipi, lie down, and cover your heads with blankets or something. Do not look at anything that takes place!"

Small-ankle and I re-entered the hunters' lodge, and he said, "Íxtaki, hasten and burn incense at your burning place and at Good-shooter also." (n and o, Fig. 9) I brought coals and short broad-leafed sage that I had stored at p (Fig. 9), and burned incense first at n and then at my own place, at o (Fig. 9). "Put coals here also, at my incense place," said Small-ankle. I did so and brought him sage. He put on his snare necklace, took his medicine bundle, took out his rattles, held them in the smoke, and struck them together. After shaking his rattles a moment or

two he began to sing, keeping time with them as he sang. The words of the song were, "My snare, something has come." And as he finished the song, he motioned toward the snare that lay, with noose extended, on the two sagebrushes before the skull, as if he were pushing (or casting) an eagle therein. My father sang a second song:—

"That one above, you keep him sacred;

But I do not keep him sacred."

By the "one above" or "above-one" my father meant the eagle. The song means that while men keep eagles sacred, the black bears have such extraordinary mystery power that they do not have to hold eagles sacred and do not fear them.

My father sang three songs, but I have forgotten the words of the third.

Small-ankle now spoke to me: "The man will stop outside and call, 'Here, friend, take it!' And you must answer, 'What kind?' He may reply, 'A young one.' Then open the door on the left side, take the eagle, and approach the snare before the skull, and throw the bird at it, not carefully, but carelessly."

We now heard the voice of the approaching man. Small-ankle began to sing the black bears' song. The man outside was now quite close to the door of the lodge and still crying, a sign that he had a young golden eagle. We recognized the voice to be Old-bear's. Closer came the voice. Then the man stopped and called, "*Dickade'*,<sup>1</sup> *díwats!*" That is, "Friend take it!" "What kind?" I called to the hunter. "*Nakats*," he answered, "a young one."

I opened the door on the left side, as indeed I would have done for any other eagle, an old golden, or a young or an old white-headed eagle. Old-bear pushed the bird through the door, head foremost. Its legs were bound, and its wings tied back.

I took the eagle, placing my hands on either side of its bent-back wings. Old-bear had plucked out the twelve tail feathers and with sinews had woven them together into a kind of fan or mat, the latter passing around the quills and being twisted twice (Fig. 11b). Old-bear had laid this sinew-bound mat, quill forward, upon the eagle's back. So, carrying the eagle, I advanced toward the fireplace. Standing on the north edge of the fire pit, I tossed the bird strongly, with both hands, head foremost across the pit toward the snare, the tail feathers still lying quills forward on its back.

---

<sup>1</sup>*Dickade'*, meaning friend, was used in the black bears' ceremonies when addressing another. It replaced other terms of relationship or friendship. Even my father and I addressed each other thus, though more often I called him Old-male-black-bear.—Wolf-chief.

The motion my father made the night before, toward the snare, referred to what I had just done with the eagle; and we got an eagle the next day, for my father had power.

As has been described at the time when my father opened his great snare and sang mystery songs, preparatory to casting the snare over the two sage bushes, he had filled his sacred pipe with tobacco and laid it at the place marked *c* (Fig. 9). He had also laid a ball, made of parched corn, sunflower seed, beans, and dried squash, in the nasal cavity of the buffalo skull.

When I tossed the eagle toward the snare, it fell back of the skull at a (Fig. 9). The eagle lay helpless. Small-ankle opened a little bag of corn ball bread, broke off a piece, and crushed and rubbed the corn ball over the bird's beak as it lay behind the skull, saying, "The foot bone feeds you." Among my father's bear medicines, the bear's foot bone was chief.

The eagle lay dazed, as if it had lost its mind. Small-ankle took the sacred pipe. Without lighting it, he touched the eagle's beak with the stem saying, "The foot bone gives you smoke." This ceremony was to kill the bird's supernatural power and make it obedient to the foot bone's medicine power.

It will be remembered also how in the story of the Big Birds' ceremony, the Hidatsa medicineman killed off his friend's medicine power by offering him his sacred pipe.<sup>1</sup>

Old-bear sat down in his place. I brought him water to drink in a heartskin bucket. From outside came the voice of a woman, "Here is food." I fetched the food, told Old-bear to get his slab trencher, and on it laid dried meat for him to eat.

When not in use I kept the heartskin bucket stuck in the side of the wall two feet from the ground.

At the time we had made our grass pillow we had also built a kind of booth for the eagles we hoped to catch. We cut branches and saplings with the leaves still on them and stood them in the soil to make a shade for the birds. The branches leaned over like one side of the roof of a cabin, the other side being open. A shelter of this kind is shown in the background of Fig. 12.

Small-ankle now addressed Old-bear: "This eagle has now been in the lodge quite a time; Foot-bone says he should be taken outside. If he remain in the lodge he will get too heavy.<sup>2</sup> If you want me to tie his

<sup>1</sup>See also, Pepper and Wilson, *ibid*.

<sup>2</sup>That is, the mystery power of the lodge will oppress the eagle and give it a heavy feeling; this seems to be the Hidatsa use of the word in this connection.—G. L. W.



foot you must pay for it." "I do want you to tie his foot," said Old-bear." "When I return home I will pay you a blanket. I have nothing with me here."

"All right," said Small-ankle. He opened his traveling bag, took out a thong, perhaps a fathom in length and two and a half inches in width, and some sinew threads. He brought the eagle to his sitting place, loosened the bonds of the eagle's feet, and moving the right foot up nearer the body of the bird, he tied it (Fig. 11d). With the sinews Small-



Fig. 12. The Eagle Hunters' Ceremonial Tipi with the Shelter for the Captured Eagles in the Right Background.

ankle sewed the long thong about the freer foot of the bird as shown in the sketch (Fig. 11d). The thong was sewed to the left foot. Eagles are left-handed, or better, left-footed; at least, they always fight with the left foot and for this reason the left foot was bound. As he sewed, he chewed black medicine and blew it over the eagle. The bird remained quiet as if powerless to struggle.

"Now," said Small-ankle, "take the bird outside to the shelter made for it. Tie the end of the long thong to the log laid there for the purpose, giving the bird about a foot of loose thong; this will permit the eagle to sit on the log. Then unbind the right leg and the wings."

*The Second Eagle.* "Now keep watch," said my father as we sat in the lodge. Whenever I went out of the lodge I watched and listened. In a short time we heard one of the women call. I went outside, and returned saying, "I hear a man crying as if he had an eagle." I went outside and told the women to cover their heads. My father put on his snare necklace, got out his rattles, burned incense and sang three songs again.

This time the hunter's crying ceased a little way off, by which I judged he did not have a young golden eagle. He came to the door and called out, "My friend, here, take it." "What kind?" I answered. "Four-spots!" said the voice. I opened the door on the left and took the eagle in. I tossed it over the fire pit with the same ceremonies as with the first eagle. Its tail feathers were laid on its back and I tossed the eagle toward the snare as I had the first.

Short-bull had captured it. He came in, opening the door on the right (that is, right from within). Small-ankle offered the bird corn ball and pipe, as before. I fetched Short-bull water. A woman brought food, dried meat, and boiled squash which I carried into the lodge. Short-bull helped himself to the meat and I returned all that was left, for the rest of us had eaten.

"If you ask me," said Small-ankle to Short-bull, "I will tie your eagle's foot, but you must pay me." "Do so," said Short-bull. "I have two butcher knives; I will give you one." The ceremonial binding and tethering of the eagle under the shelter was repeated as for the first bird.

*The Others Report.* Sunset was approaching. The other hunters straggled back, one at a time. No more eagles had been caught. "I bring food," called a woman's voice. I went out and brought in the dried meat and a kettle of green-dried corn, boiled with squash. I also brought in wooden and iron bowls and passed them around to serve as eating bowls. After eating, I returned the kettle.

"Now," said Small-ankle, "we will start the ceremony again." When I had thrown the eagle at the snare, I had knocked over several of the stick offerings. These Small-ankle replaced, but did not put up the snare which had also fallen.

"Good-shooter," said my father, "fill the pipe." Good-shooter filled a small pipe and passed it down the line to the left until it reached Small-ankle. I brought a coal in a split stick, and laid it on the ground before Small-ankle, who lighted the pipe and smoked, as did also Short-bull. The latter passed the pipe to Broom, who handed it to me. I carried it

across the end of the line to the other side, and so it reached Good-shooter again.

"Now," said Small-ankle, "I want to hear about your hunting. Good-shooter, what have you seen today?" "Before I got to my pit," said Good-shooter, "I came across a bunch of buffalo that ran from me. When I reached the pit, I saw another bunch of buffalo beyond, on the other side." "You should not say 'buffalo,'" interrupted Small-ankle, "you should say 'black things,' for that is what they are called in the black bears' sacred language." Good-shooter continued: "Not long after I got to my pit, I saw one eagle. It circled around the place once or twice and flew to the east. This afternoon, I saw another that seemed about to come down, but flew away. That is all."

Mussel-shell-necklace next spoke: "One young golden eagle came to my pit. He circled around, flew down, and alighted on my bait. I put out my hands to catch his legs, but held them too high, and so touched his tail feathers and pushed the bird off the bait. I missed his legs and the eagle flew away. Another eagle came and circled around the pit; but flew away."

And so all reported. Some of the others had seen eagles, but no more eagles had come down to the pits.

*Ceremonies with Pipe.* "All right," said Small-ankle. "Good-shooter, fill the small pipe." Good-shooter did so, and walked around and laid the pipe on the ground before Small-ankle. "Now Íxtąki, go and call in the women," said Small-ankle. I did so and the women came in. "You sit there near the door," said Small-ankle. The women obeyed, sitting at the places marked *wo, wo, wo* (Fig. 9).

Small-ankle painted all his face red and put some red on his hair. "Íxtąki," he cried, "bring me a coal." I did so. He opened a small sack filled with pine needles that we call *maiditsitsi*, or smell-good. On the coal laid between Small-ankle and the buffalo skull, he put a pinch of the pine needles, saying, "This incense belongs to the birds." Then he prayed, "You black bears' timid birds, this incense belongs to you. I want you to try to lead the others, your eagle friends, to follow you into this lodge." He called the eagles the timid birds of the bears, meaning that the bears' magic had overcome their fierceness and made them gentle.

Small-ankle stood up, facing the skull and said, "Íxtąki, fetch me a coal." I brought the coal and laid it near the big ceremonial pipe. My father raised it and held the stem toward the two tails of the captured eagles lying on the buffalo skull and prayed, "Foot-bone has kept this good tobacco for you to smoke. You must not think there has been any



evil done you. You must think everything is right. Foot-bone will not kill you. Some day you shall go back east. Therefore call your friends here. Many good things are offered you here."

Small-ankle now lighted the pipe, smoked, and offered the stem to the lodge, saying, "Now you hunting lodge of the black bears, smoke! And all you sacred things in here, smoke." And he held the pipe, circling around. "Now Good-shooter," he continued, "you smoke and come here direct from your place." Good-shooter did so, not avoiding to pass in front of the skull. He did not sit down but stooped and smoked as Small-ankle held the stem to him. "Good. I am glad you have offered me the pipe. I am now sure I will capture many eagles," said Good-shooter, and he returned to his place.

Mussel-necklace next came, stepping right over the snake stick. Small-ankle held the stem to him and he smoked. Next came Big-bull, and so all the rest, down the line toward the left, the last to smoke being Short-bull. I did not smoke, but only touched the pipe. My father did not let me smoke as I was too young.

All having smoked, Small-ankle shook the ashes from the pipe with his cleaning stick. He held the bowl toward the west, saying, "I wish more of you eagles would come and smoke. Some have smoked. We want others to follow them and smoke also." He repeated this four times. Each time, as he ended, he turned the pipe bowl downward and tapped out the ashes. "I always give offerings to you. Therefore I want you to come to this place. I know this is a big world but I want you to come straight to this place," continued Small-ankle.

The ceremonial pipe had been lying ready, filled with tobacco, since the day before. It would have remained undisturbed if no eagles had been taken. It was used for offering smoke to the eagles and was now used because two eagles had been taken.

The pipe emptied, Small-ankle filled it again with tobacco, put it in its place, and returned to his own place. "Young eagles," he cried, "I have filled the pipe. When you come again you shall have smoke!"

Then he took up the long snare that had fallen down from the sage-brushes, passed the long end under his necklace snare, and had Short-bull hold it again. Again he sang the song he had sung when he first cast the noose. He cast the noose again and the snare fell over the two sage bushes and hung there, open. "Good!" cried all the company. Each said, "I want to catch many eagles."

*The Dance; Tasting the Eagle Feather.* Small-ankle continued: Foot-bone says, 'We have now caught two eagles, and we should therefore en-

joy ourselves, for that is why we came here.' Let us, and the women also, dance and be joyful. Foot-bone asks me to have you carry snares in the dance; I will therefore pass them to you and let you do so."

Small-ankle took the two eagle tails and said, "Foot-bone says we have caught these two eagles today. He says I may have them. I am glad, for I can use them in many ways, as for arrow plumes or fans in hot weather. But I give them to you Good-shooter; come and take them." Before he handed them to Good-shooter, Small-ankle said, "Here is a feather. I want to taste it, since Foot-bone gave it to me." And with the end of his tongue he tasted the feather on its quill. "Oh, it is sweet!" he cried. "You try it too; come, take it." Good-shooter arose and also tasted the feather. "Oh," he cried, "it is sweet. I am going to make a fan or arrow plumes. But, friend, I give them to you," and he passed the two tails to Mussel-necklace.

Mussel-necklace repeated Good-shooter's words and acts, and passed the two tails on until they came to me. I said, "I will keep them to make arrow plumes, but I will give them to you Broom!" Broom spoke likewise and gave them to his father, Short-bull, who said, "Oh I will make a fan to cool myself, or I will make head ornaments! But, I will give them to you Old-male-black-bear."

"I am so glad they come back to me," said Small-ankle. "I can use them in many ways. But I was going to give them to this buffalo skull." He laid them upon the skull, saying, "These feathers are going to be your head ornaments, but they do not fully belong to you!"

"Íxtaki," said my father, "bring me a coal again."

I fetched coals with my split stick and laid them in the incense at place y (Fig. 9). Small-ankle laid on the incense, opened his medicine bundle, took out the snares, (Fig. 10b) which he had out before, and bunching them together in his joined hands, held them in the smoke.

"Good-shooter," he called, "hold this while you dance. Hold it up in the air, or as you will. Cast the noose into the air, or in any direction, as if you were snaring an eagle and motion as if dragging him down."

Good-shooter received the snare and returned to his place, passing before the skull, for all rules were now suspended. Each man received a snare, and each woman also, in order in the line, Short-bull being the last to receive one. The snare was held in the hands, quills of the feathers down (Fig. 11c). "If you will do this," continued Small-ankle, "I am sure you will capture many eagles." "And now," he added. "You, boys dance around the fire four times; at the end of the fourth round, stop. Ready now! Foot-bone says everyone must enjoy himself."

We stood in a circle around the fire pit. Small-ankle, sitting in his place, began to sing and shake his rattles. The men yelled and danced to the left, jumping sidewise on both feet at the same time. Each dancer motioned with his snare as if catching eagles in the air over head.

When Small-ankle had sung four songs, he struck the rattles together as a signal to stop. We each sat down, with his snare in his hand, as Small-ankle had bidden us. We waited for what was to follow. Small-ankle spoke: "We have caught two eagles now. They are the black bears' food. We ourselves will not eat the eagles as did the black bears, but I will sing the song the black bears used in old days when they ate eagles. Do not rise as I sing, but sit shaking your snares."

He opened his corn ball bag and took out a piece of corn ball loaf (*mäpvi'-tjti*). This word means pemmican, but is the sacred eagle hunt word for corn ball.

*The Corn Ball Loaf.* This corn ball loaf was made of parched corn pounded to a meal and sunflower seed parched and pounded very fine. All this took time. The two kinds of meal were then mixed, dry.

Dried squash and beans were boiled together. For this, a section was cut from a string of dried squash and the ends of the severed string tied together, making a ring as big as that made by putting together the tips of the forefingers and the two thumbs. When the squash was cooked, this ring was lifted out with a stick, the beans remaining in the kettle. The squash slices were dropped in a wooden bowl and the grass string was drawn out and thrown away. The cook now took a big-horn spoon and chopped and mashed the squash slices, using the edge of the horn spoon for the purpose. Then the cook took out the boiled beans with the spoon, mixed them well with the squash, stirring with the spoon, but not mashing the beans. The thick broth-like liquor made by the boiling was poured in with the mess. The beans and squash were sometimes boiled with a little fat, and sometimes not.

The mixed meal of parched corn and sunflower seed was now poured in and all was well stirred with a spoon. It soon became thick and the hands were then employed, and the mess was worked until it became like a lump of dough.

This big lump, or loaf, of corn ball dough was carried by an eagle hunting party. About a square yard of tent skin was folded over the loaf like an envelope and tied securely with thongs. On the march, as I remember, this package was carried by our party in one of the double bags we used, thrown over the back of a horse. When a corn ball was wanted a bit was broken off and squeezed into a lump in the fingers.



*The Kettle Songs.* Small-ankle opened the package and broke off a bit of the corn ball loaf, and squeezing the fragment in his hands made a corn ball of it. We called this food, four-vegetables-mixed. Small-ankle called each man and woman, in turn, beginning with Good-shooter. Each came forward, stepping over the snake sticks as he might choose, and receiving a corn ball, returned to his place; and holding his snare in his left hand each ate his corn ball.

"Now," called Small-ankle, "the black bears' kettle wants to go to the fire. While I sing the song, you shake the snares in your hands, up and down, just as if each snare were a rattle." Small-ankle now sang:—

Black bears, your kettle is moving to the fire;  
Black bears, your kettle is now on the fire;  
Black bears, your kettle is now heating on the fire;  
Black bears, your kettle looks red hot!

"And now," said Small-ankle, "I must sing the 'eat food' song:"—

"Something came to my snare.  
I placed my snare and found it sacred.  
I placed my snare; and now I find something to eat!"

Small-ankle sang thus a long time, shaking and flourishing his rattles energetically. By 'something to eat' he meant the eagle which the black bears in the song were supposed to eat.

After the songs, Small-ankle, with a single stroke, passed the flat surface of his right-hand rattle up his left arm to the shoulder; then the left-hand rattle up the right arm, repeating again, each rattle twice. Then he put them away. The rest of us returned our snares to Small-ankle, each man took his seat, and the women left the lodge.

For a while, we listened to stories Small-ankle told us. At last he said, "Good-shooter, I appoint you to go out on the top of a hill in the morning to see if the wind is favorable. If it comes from the west, come in, and wake us. But it is getting late," continued Small-ankle, "Let us stretch ourselves." By this, he meant, "Let us sleep." In the sacred eagle language, "to sleep" meant "to be dead."

*Traditions of Spring Trapping.* Small-ankle hoped for a west wind because only such a wind brought eagles. In the fall, the eagles migrated from the west, so a north or south wind did not bring them. In our fall hunting we never went to our pits unless there was a west wind. We always placed the pits on the west side [of a hill]. Eagles would then come down and alight. If the pits were on the east side, the eagles would very likely pass over head.

There is a tradition among us that eagles were once trapped in the spring [when the migration would be ascending the Missouri from the east and south] as well as in the fall; but lice or fleas or some other kind of insects were caught from the eagles at the spring hunting, and these gave the hunters poison so that the men died. Other hunters found that following their spring hunting ill luck came upon them; so the people believed that the spring hunting of eagles must bring evil mystery power upon them, and they ceased eagle hunting at this season.

*Breakfast.* Early the next morning I heard Good-shooter's voice, "Íxtaki, get up and make the fire." Small-ankle arose and asked, "Whence blows the wind?" "From the north." "We will stay in the lodge then," said Small-ankle.

I got my bucket and went for water. I passed the filled bucket to the men in turn, beginning with Small-ankle. My father drank, filled his mouth with water, blew it into his palms, and thus washed his hands and face. When he was washing, he pulled out the pillow of hay next the pillow stick to let the water fall beneath. Short-bull held the stick handle of the bucket while Small-ankle washed, since if the bucket were set on the ground all the water would have run out. The bucket was passed next to Short-bull, and so to all, Good-shooter receiving it last. Three or four persons would exhaust the water and I would have to fill the bucket again at the spring. Broom and I washed last, at the spring.

I now heard the women cry, "I bring food!" and I carried the food in. It was fresh venison, dried green corn and dried squash boiled together. Two deer had been shot the evening before by Big-bull. I distributed the food and all ate. Then our leader, Small-ankle, said, "Now boys, get your guns and horses and go hunting; you are to hunt for black bears' red bait." In eagle hunting language this last meant fresh meat. I did not go hunting but stayed in the lodge with Broom and No-first-finger. Small-ankle also remained.

*Votive Self-Torture.* "I want to suffer for the gods," said No-first-finger, when the hunters were gone. "I hear that one way is to pack into camp twelve loads of firewood on my back. I have heard that a man who does this will surely get what he wants afterwards. Explain to me how this should be done." "Good," said Small-ankle, "you are a man. That is a very sacred way to suffer." "I want to do so as soon as someone returns," said No-first-finger. "When a man suffers and fasts," said Small-ankle, "if he is seeking something, he will always get it. I am glad you wish to suffer so. Also I wish to have good fortune for myself.

The gods will comfort you and give you your desire. I will pray them now to help you.

"Once a man named Tsakáka-atúc or Bird-head, brought in twelve loads of wood in eagle hunting time. Wood was scarce and he had to go a long way for it. He took off his moccasins, for he wanted to suffer and be pitied and helped by the gods. Barefoot, he sometimes stepped on

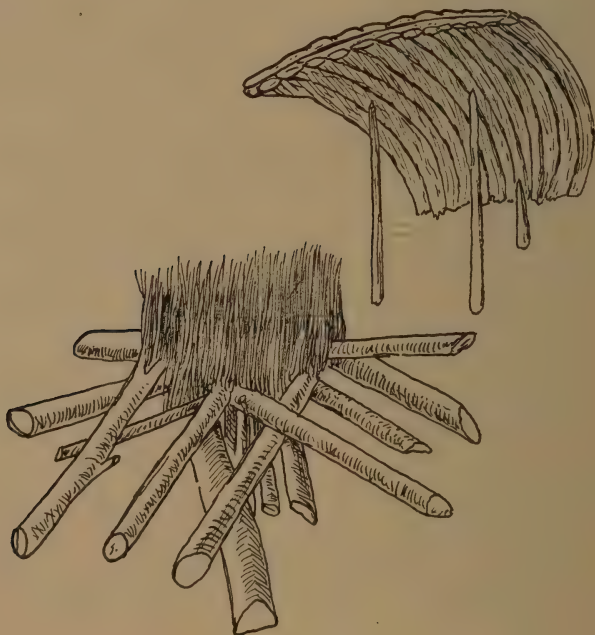


Fig. 13. Sketch to show Method of roasting a Side of Meat.

cactus, but he did not feel the sharp spines, for his heart was very strong and the gods comforted him. He spent a whole day packing in the loads of wood, and at sunset he felt quite weak. As he was returning to camp, he stumbled and fell, and found himself lying on a white buffalo robe on the prairie. It was no dream; the robe was real. Many men have seen things in visions, but this man had no vision; the robe was real. A white buffalo robe was hard to get and, of all things, most costly. When Bird-head got up there was no robe there; but a short time afterward he killed



a white buffalo. Also several times later he killed white buffaloes; and he became a war party leader, struck enemies, and gained honor marks."

*Return of the Hunters.* As the afternoon wore away, two of the hunters, Took-away-a-gun and Porcupine-head, returned. They brought back quite a quantity of meat. "Many buffalo are over there," they said. "The rest of the hunters will be back soon. They were not quite ready to begin cutting up their game when we left." The two hunters left their meat packs near the women's camp. We were all glad to have so much meat.

Broom and I roasted one whole buffalo side with the ribs. We skewered a stick through it to keep it stretched. Under the stick skewer, where it appeared outside the meat, we attached green hide thongs by which we swung the side of meat slowly over a fire of coals until it was roasted. This was done outside the lodge. Fig. 11e is a rough sketch showing the thongs. The skewer appears thrust in and out of the meat. Broom and I were about two hours roasting the side; all this time we two boys swung the meat to and fro.

The women meanwhile were roasting another side of buffalo meat which they mounted on two short stakes, about two feet high, driven four inches into the ground. The ribs were turned inward toward the fire and the side of meat leaned slightly, resting on a third stake. Later, the meat was turned with the ribs outward, from the fire. The meat was so placed that the wind blew the heat from the fire toward it. Fig. 13 shows how the women's roasting was done. Their fire was near their tent.

When our roast was done, we two boys cut branches and laid the side of meat upon them on the ground. We then cut out each rib, with the flesh clinging to it, and were ready for the feasters.

Meanwhile the other hunters had come in. I took the roast ribs into the tent and served, first the leader, then each of the men as I passed down the line, Good-shooter last. I bore only one or two ribs in my hand at a time, however.

Some of the hunters had not yet come home. Before the bed of each hunter yet missing, I put a little pile of leaves and on them laid a rib, ready.

The green hides the hunters had brought home had been piled on the grass near the meat pile, for the women to look after them.

*Torture of No-first-finger.* When all had returned, No-first-finger said, "Old-male-black-bear, shall I eat or not? I want to suffer for the

gods tonight. Shall I eat? What is the rule?" "You had better not eat," said Small-ankle. When the others heard of No-first-finger's vow, they said, "Good! You will suffer and get more mystery power, and so we shall catch more eagles."

To Good-shooter, No-first-finger now said, "I want to suffer and fast. I am going to fetch twelve loads of firewood. Pierce the flesh of my back with an arrow point in preparation for the fasting."

When No-first-finger first consulted Small-ankle, the latter had ordered him to go out and prepare twelve loads of firewood, each as large as a woman was able to carry. No-first-finger did so, going out in the morning and returning about noon. He had left the loads of wood ready to bring in, in various places about camp, in the timber, in the hills and elsewhere.

Good-shooter and his helper went outside the lodge and we all followed. No-first-finger knelt and rested his hands on the ground. Good-shooter took the flesh on each side of No-first-finger's back, between the forefinger and thumb of his left hand, and his helper grasped it likewise an inch or two away and, lifting the flesh in a ridge, Good-shooter inserted the arrow point. A hardwood skewer, four inches long, was thrust through the aperture and a thong of tent skin looped over the skewer and twisted to make it stay. A long rawhide thong dangled from the loop. The flesh on both sides of his back being thus treated, the two long thongs trailed behind, like the thongs of a carrying strap.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, No-first-finger wept and cried: "O gods, I am poor. I am suffering for you. I want my name to be great among my people. I want to be rich, not poor. Help me!"

Small-ankle now spoke: "Go out and bring in the loads of wood. The sticks are gathered in piles. When you come to a pile, kneel with your back to it. Slip the two rawhide ropes fastened to the flesh on either side of your back under the wood pile, like the ends of a carrying strap. Catch the two ends in your hands and draw them over your shoulders and pulling on the thongs, draw the wood up on your back. Rise, with the ends adjusted as a woman adjusts the ends of her carrying strap to carry her load. This will be the hardest part of your task and will make you suffer."

<sup>1</sup>The torture by suspension as described above is closely similar to that described by Catlin for the Mandan *okipé* ceremony, though in the eagle ceremony the votary dragged neither buffalo skulls nor other sacred objects, as he did in the *okipé*. (See Catlin, George, *Illustrations of the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, 2 vols., London, 1843, vol. 1, 170).

According to Miss Densmore, (*ibid.*, 63) the incisions preparatory to the insertion of the suspension thongs were made by the individual's clan fathers or clan brothers and not by the leader of the ceremony. She adds also that usually the man so suspended was released by midnight, but if he so desired he remained until daybreak. In the old days the ordeal was repeated from ten to thirty times, or until eagles were secured.

No-first-finger departed, weeping and crying, and the rest of us re-entered the lodge.

"Good-shooter," called Small-ankle, "fill a pipe. I will pray to the gods for that faster." He did as bidden, observing the hunting lodge rules and not passing between the skull and the fire. He laid the pipe on the ground before Small-ankle. "Īxtaki," said the latter, "fetch coals." I did so, laying them in the incense place. Small-ankle laid sage on the coals, put on his snare necklace, took out his rattles, and shook them, singing for a long time. "I can help that young man. I can implore the gods for him," he cried as he ended. And he doffed his necklace and put away his rattles, first rubbing them up his arms, each rattle twice, as before described (p. 178).

Small-ankle lighted the pipe with a coal I had brought. Pointing the stem toward his sacred bundle he prayed: "That young man is suffering for the gods of this lodge and for this sacred ceremony. He wants to catch eagles and receive a vision and have a revelation to help him. Help him all you can, O gods." He prayed a long time. He then smoked with Short-bull. The pipe was passed around to the right until it reached Good-shooter, who threw out the ashes and laid the pipe away.

Now we heard No-first-finger crying as he returned. The women, seeing him, began to weep also, for he was a brave young man. "Do not go outside," said Small-ankle to us in the lodge. "Remain within until No-first-finger has brought all his piles of wood to camp."

No-first-finger did not enter, but dropped his load of wood outside at the right of the lodge door, reckoning right and left as we Indians reckon. He went away again, crying. Again he brought in a load; by sunset he had fetched all twelve loads and dropped them outside, at the right of the door.

Good-shooter and his helper went outside and removed the skewers from the faster's back, for No-first-finger had called out, "Old-male-black-bear, all the loads have been brought." The three came into the lodge. The rest of us, going outside, saw a great pile of wood near the door.

*Torture by Suspension.* I gave No-first-finger food and water. As he ate, Small-ankle looked at me as if he wanted to say something. "Īxtaki," he said at last, "you are now old enough to act like a man. You have seen how this one has suffered. Thus does one become great and see visions and receive power from the gods. Thus do men become chiefs and obtain power so that their lives are made estimable. Do you want to suffer in this way?" "I am willing to suffer now," I answered.



It was almost sunset. I asked for white clay to paint myself, as all fasters do. Good-shooter gave me a little bit. I got some water, stripped to my clout and moccasins, and rubbed the clay over my body. "Now," said Good-shooter, "we will go out on this hill [against which the lodge was erected] and bend down a young poplar, that we may hang you to it." To the others he said, "Now, let this lad seize hold of that moon symbol that belongs to Íxtaki and hangs just over his place. Let him do this here in the lodge, by the light of the fire." But I could not reach the moon snare, so I stood grasping the two lodge poles, between which the snare was thrust as it hung in the wall just over head.

Good-shooter prepared two skewers as he had done for No-first-finger, and took an arrow. "Now try to weep," he said. I tried hard to do so; but my voice was just a boy's and I was a little frightened, though I tried hard to be brave.

Good-shooter and Mussel-necklace approached me. They measured my back so that the two skewers would be placed at even distances on either side. If not so placed the skewers would make me suffer much. One of the men wetted the tip of his finger in his mouth, and made a mark in the clay paint on my body. Then they lifted the skin, with thumb and forefinger, as in No-first-finger's case, and thrust the arrow through and put in the skewers. The incision on the left of my back was made first. When they were putting in the skewers, the muscles in my back drew up rigid and hard. A loop was drawn over each skewer. From each loop hung a heavy thong; two and a half feet from the loops the two thongs were united, forming a fork, from which ran a strong rawhide rope.

"We must now find a proper tree," said Good-shooter and his helper. They went out of the door. I followed, dragging the long rawhide rope. The two men felt of the trees in the gloom. "Here is a good one," said one, "let us bend it down." It was a young tree and one of the men bent it over." "Face the other way," they said. I turned my face toward the lodge. The men fastened the rawhide rope to the [top of the] tree. "Straighten your body; stand up," they cried as they released the tree.

The tree was quite strong, and its spring jerked me off my feet. "Ha<sup>n</sup> ha<sup>n</sup> ha<sup>n</sup>!" I cried, as I felt myself jerked off the ground. The skin over my breast was drawn so tightly I could not breathe. I could not open my eyes, but my ears were open and I could hear.

"Look out, he is going to die. Quick, let him down!" I heard one of the men cry. They bent the tree down and I opened my eyes, for I was

now standing on the ground. "We have nearly killed this boy," I heard them say. "It is enough. We will take him back into the lodge."

I was weeping now, not as a brave man sobs, but like a big boy, "Hu<sup>n</sup> hu<sup>n</sup> hu<sup>n</sup>," or like a child being whipped. I was sobbing with the fright and pain. "Stop crying," said the two men. I grew quiet. We walked back and reëntered the lodge, the other two preceding me.

They told Small-ankle what had happened. "You made a mistake," he said. "No one can stand being jerked up in the air like that, he would smother shortly. You should have bent down a small sapling or the limb of a tree; the boy could then have walked around on the ground at the end of his rope."

I donned my clothes. The wounds in my back felt like fire and my clothes made them burn worse. The hunters were now talking. I listened. We now had plenty of meat for they had killed nine buffaloes. Small-ankle began telling stories of the black bears. My back still pained and was getting no better. I lay down, but could not lie on my back. I lay on one side, then on the other, then prone on my breast. At last, I fell asleep.

*Another Day of Eagle Trapping.* Good-shooter woke me the next morning. "I have been out," he said, "there seems to be a good wind blowing. I am going out again to the top of the hill here to see if I am right." He soon returned and called, "Old-male-black-bear, get up. There is a good wind this morning." "Good," exclaimed my father and he got up.

"It is cloudy, however," continued Good-shooter, "it looks as if it might snow soon." "All rise," cried my father. "All of you fast today. I think the gods will help you." The men arose and bound on their belts.

"Bring your bait," cried Small-ankle.

While the hunters went out for their bait, Small-ankle called to me to bring him coals. I stirred the fire and brought him coals which I laid in the incense place. Small-ankle burned incense and prayed.

One of the hunters brought his bait. Small-ankle held it in the smoke, praying, "I wish you to make eagles sit on you!" and returned the bait to the owner saying, "I will sing the [proper] songs after you have gone." He also handed the owner a snare on a bunch of feathers, as before; and so with all the others. The bait was the same as used before, but as the weather was cool, they did not smell.

Small-ankle, Big-bull, Broom, and I remained in the lodge. I fetched water for them to wash. The women brought boiled buffalo hump for our breakfast. I washed the clay off my face, but not from my

body. My wounds still hurt and the glands under my arms were swollen and sore. I had to move about gently and slowly.

Small-ankle bade me bring coals. He put on his snare necklace and sang the bait songs and other songs. He sang a long time.

Having finished, he brushed his arms with the rattles, and put them away, saying, "Foot-bone, you have given me a good wind; and all your black bears [i.e., the eagle hunters] have gone hunting. I wish them to bring back many eagles." "And now my friend, Big-bull," continued Small-ankle, "while the hunters are away, take Good-shooter's place, fill and care for the pipes, and we will smoke."

About noon one of the women called, "We hear someone on the other side of the hill crying." I went out and returned, reporting, "Someone is coming; he is crying." "Good," cried my father. He bade me fetch coals and he burned incense, as did Big-bull in Good-shooter's place. My father began a song. The crying voice came closer and someone called, "Friend, take it!"

I received the bird, a young golden eagle. The tail feathers lay on the eagle's back. I brought the bird into the lodge and tossed it to the snare. The hunter's name was Porcupine-head. "Friend, here is another," he called. "What is it," I answered. "A young one." Porcupine-head had caught two eagles. He entered the lodge, I gave him water, and the women brought him food. When he had eaten my father said to him, "Well, tell us what you have seen today."

"Almost as soon as I entered my pit," said Porcupine-head, "I saw an eagle. It paused in its flight, circled about, and flew away. A second came and did likewise, and a third. A little before noon, one circled down and settled on my bait. I put my hands out and caught it by its legs. I raised the cover frame with my head and drew the bird down. I tied its legs and wings and pulled out the tail feathers. By the time I had done all this, another eagle came down. I caught this in the same way. If I had stayed longer, I might have caught a third, but I came back to camp."

"If you wish," said Small-ankle, "I will sew up a foot of each of your eagles, but you must pay me." "Good," said Porcupine-head. "When I get home I will give you two calicoes."

Black medicine was now chewed as already described. Toward evening the other hunters came in; none had caught any eagles. I fetched water and all the hunters drank heavily. The women brought food. When all had eaten and I had taken back the eating bowls, my father said, "It is now sunset. Let us again have a good time. Call in the women."



I went out and announced, "Old-male-black-bear calls you into the lodge to dance tonight." We danced, as before, except that Small-ankle said, "Foot-bone says, 'Paint your sisters' faces red, as the black bears' sisters faces were painted long ago.'" He passed out the paint in a small bag, saying, "Let the women paint themselves as I bid, and each will get her wish." The women painted themselves and returned the paint. The design on their faces was like that of the Black Mouths,<sup>1</sup> except that it was in red instead of black. After the dance, when the rattles had been put away the men asked Small-ankle for a story. "I will tell you" he said, "the story of Old-brown-man."

*Story of Itä'ka-xī'dic*<sup>2</sup>. An old man named Itä'ka-xī'dic, or Old-brown-man once lived with the Hidatsa. He was so called because he wore an old yellow calfskin, the skin of a spring buffalo calf, the fur of which looked grayish or brown. He kept the string which bound the corners of his robe across his neck tied all the time. Although an old man, he was quite strong, because he was an eagle; but he had been born into our tribe, a man, like one of us.

Some of the young men in our tribe gave him food or did him kindnesses. The old man would wish in his mind that the young man being kind to him would win honor marks, and the young man was sure to win them. But nobody knew the old man had this mystery power. Even the young man who won the honor marks never knew that he owed them to Old-brown-man.

One man once was very kind to Old-brown-man and afterwards won four honor marks. Then he dreamed that it was Old-brown-man who gave them to him. This man whom Old-brown-man had thus honored went eagle hunting in the fall. Many of the tribe went up the Missouri and the Little Missouri rivers for the same purpose. Besides his wife and brother, a small boy, this young man took with him, his friend and his friend's wife; five in one tent. The party wanted to go to an eagle hunting place at the mouth of the Yellowstone.

Now Old-brown-man had a very old wife; he said to her, "I should like to go and visit my sons who are eagle hunting." He called all the young men his sons. "No," said his wife, "we are old and cannot walk

<sup>1</sup>Lowie, this series, vol. 11, 276, states that the "Black Mouths painted the lower part of the face black, and drew a slanting line from the forehead across the face."

<sup>2</sup>Miss Densmore's informant (*ibid.*, 64 et seq.) for the Hidatsa related an origin myth for eagle trapping differing entirely from the one here given. In Miss Densmore's version a young man loses his way while hunting and while wandering around sees an eagle caught by a wolverene in a pit. The wolverene tells the young man how to bait the eagle by spitting on his left hand, sticking it through the cover of the pit, and then seizing the eagle when it approached. The young man and wolverene go to the wolverene's lodge where the man is fed. They trap eagles again and a black eagle hooks his talons into the young man's arm which is doctored with a black root. He is sent home with bundles of eagle tail feathers.

so far." "Yes, I can," he answered. "My legs are strong and I can walk. I can go up the Missouri until I come to the eagle hunting camp." Old-brown-man insisted until his wife consented and said, "Well, if you are sure that you can get back here again, why go." "I will go," he said.

His wife made him moccasins and when she had finished them said, "I will go with you as far as I can and then return. I will go as far as that hill over yonder." The hill she mentioned was about eight miles from the village, which was then at Knife River. They came to the top of the hill and Old-brown-man said: "I have never shown myself to you." "I have never known that you could appear any different from what you are now," she answered. "No," he said, "I have never shown you how I could change myself. But cover your face and do not look until I say, 'Now look at me.' Then look up."

The old woman lay down with her face to the ground and covered with her hands. Soon she heard a kind of shaking, as when an eagle sometimes shakes itself; but she waited until a voice in the air above her said, "Now see me." She looked up and saw in the air above her a very old four-spot eagle, with worn and ragged tail and wing feathers. The woman glanced about, but saw only the eagle. "Is that you, my husband?" she cried.

"Yes," he answered. "Now return to the village and I will return thither in a very short time." The woman began to weep, for she thought, "My husband is of the gods!"

Old-brown-man came to the place where Like-a-fishhook village was afterwards built. A little below and on the south side of the river is a point and here a few young men were hunting eagles. Old-brown-man transformed himself into a man again, dressed in his old brown robe, and appeared as before. He waited until the sun had set and entered the camp. Some of the young men, seeing him, cried, "Old-brown-man is coming."

Old-brown-man came into the hunting lodge. As he did so, the first young man within pretended to seize the old man's legs, crying, "I have caught an eagle." Each of the others, as he passed them, did likewise, crying, "I have caught an eagle."

They gave Old-brown-man water and food and placed him near the door (on which side I have forgotten). After he had eaten, they said to him, "Now tell us a story." "I will tell you a story," he said, "but first bring me a log to sit upon; I will then be more comfortable." Some of the young men brought in a log about eight inches in diameter. "Put it in front of the buffalo skull," said Old-brown-man. The man carrying

the log, hesitated and looked around. "No," cried one, "this lodge is sacred. The buffalo skull is a sacred object." But another said, "Yes, put the log in front of the skull." Old-brown-man untied his robe, laid it on the log, and sat on it.

"Now I will tell you a story," he said. "Once upon a time an old man lived among his people. He was really a four-spot eagle who had changed himself into a man. One autumn, this old man went with his wife to the top of a high hill. 'Cover your face,' the old man said to the woman. She had faith in him and believed all he said and obeyed him. When she looked up, the old man had turned into an eagle, and was flying over head. The woman returned home and the eagle man flew up the river."

"Oh, that is a good story," all cried.

"The eagle man found some young men who were hunting eagles. He turned himself into an old man again and entered the hunters' lodge. The young men liked him, and took him by the legs saying, 'I have caught an eagle.' They cared for the old man, giving him drink and food, and treated him with kindness. The old man liked these boys too. They thought well of each other. The hunters did not know this, however. Now because they were kind to him, each of these young men will catch twelve [young] golden eagles and twelve spotted eagles. The old man gave them power to catch these eagles, but they do not know it yet. He was himself an old eagle and had power to give other eagles to them. Now this story is of myself, and this ends my story. I want to go further up the river." He stood up, put on his robe, shook himself and, becoming an eagle, flew up through the smoke hole.

He ascended the river and came to the bluffs that we call the Slides, opposite Independence. The hills here were good for hunting eagles, for the eagles liked to rest upon them. He transformed himself again into an old man and walked to the lodge of some hunters who were there. But the young men there said, "We cannot entertain that old man here. We have no room for him." "Send him home," said one.

Old-brown-man entered the lodge and the hunters said, "Old man, why do you come so far? You might get lost!" But one young man in the lodge said, "Let him in. He is very old and he can tell us a story." So they let him in, but no one caught him by the legs. He sat down by the door. "Boys," he said, "you ask me to tell you a story. I wish some of you would bring in a log and put it in front of the buffalo skull and I will sit on it. Then I will tell you a story." "No," said one, "this is a sacred lodge. We cannot do so until the lodge is thrown open. This is



a sacred place." "But I am used to telling stories only in front of the skull," said Old-brown-man. Some of the hunters believed him and brought in a log which they placed, as he had bidden them. Old-brown-man took off his robe and sat on the log, as he had done in the other camp.

He told the same story as in the first lodge; but when he told of changing into an eagle, one of the young men cried, "This man is crazy. That is no story!"

But the old man continued: "This old man became an eagle. He came to the next camp and became a man again. The hunters here did not treat him kindly. They did not give him food or water, and they made fun of him, only pretending to like his story and listen to it. When he came in, they did not ask him to sit down. Only one of them said, 'Let us take him in and make fun of him, having him tell us stories.' They gave him a seat by the door, but the old man said: 'I always sit in front of the skull,' and he asked the young men to bring in a log and put it there for him. The young men did not want to do this, but the old man kept asking them to do it and because he had mystery power to compel them to obey, one of the hunters went out and brought in a log which he placed before the skull." Old-brown-man sat down, but did not untie his robe.

Old-brown-man then said: "Now that old man in the eagle hunting lodge is myself. That old man also thinks that the hunters in this eagle hunting camp will not catch a single eagle and they will go hungry and will have to return home." Old-brown-man shook himself and flew up through the smoke hole.

He flew up the river to the next place where a few young men had a camp at End Pit or Last Pit, as it was called. It is north of the Missouri River on the side of the Little Knife. A hill there is called by that name.

He changed himself into an old man again and came to the hunting lodge, walking with a staff. The young men were very kind to him. One gave him moccasins and made room for him to sit near the leader. One held a buffalo horn for him to drink water. As he passed, each hunter cried out, "I have caught an eagle," and caught hold of his legs. Evening came and they asked him to tell them a story. On the log before the fire, he felt so happy for the kindnesses shown him, that he shook his robe and very nearly turned into an eagle again. He told the same story as at the first lodge, and wished well to the hunters, saying: "I wish that every man here may catch all the eagles and get all the feathers that he can carry off. And now," he added, "this story is of myself." He shook himself and flew up the smoke hole.

Up the Missouri he flew. At the mouth of the Yellowstone, on the south side, he found another hunting camp at a place called One-cotton-wood-tree hill, where was the best eagle pit. Here again, he turned into an old man. This time he did not wait until evening, but walked at once into the camp. There were but two women in the camp, for the men had gone out hunting game. One woman was the wife of the man in the village who had been very kind to Old-brown-man and who had won many honor marks, although he did not know he owed them to that old man. This woman recognized Old-brown-man and did not like it that he had come to visit her husband. The other woman called Old-brown-man to her and took him into her tent. As he came she caught him by the legs and cried, "I have caught an eagle," and gave him food and drink. As the moccasins the old man wore were full of holes she gave him another pair, from those that belonged to her husband.<sup>1</sup>

The hunters came home. The woman went to the hunting lodge and called out, "Old-brown-man has come." "Well, let him come in," they called back. The woman told Old-brown-man that the hunters called him. As he entered the lodge the man who had been kind to Old-brown-man in the village, cried out, "It is my father. Come here and take my place."

But Old-brown-man thought within himself, "Yes, my son, you have always been kind to me, but your wife has not." And he sat down with his head bowed, as if troubled. "What troubles you?" asked the young men. "Nothing. I am only weary," answered the old man. "Sit here, then," they said. They went out and asked their wives, "How fared the old man here? How did you treat him. He acts as if he were troubled." "I did not wish to see that old man," said the wife of the young man who had once received kindness of Old-brown-man. "Why?" asked her husband. "Oh, nothing, I just did not want to see him," she answered.

Her husband was very angry, but it was a rule of the eagle camp that a man must not whip his wife while in the camp, so he merely said, "All right," and returned to the hunting lodge.

The other young man, whose wife had been so kind to the old man, was told by her, "When that old man came in I gave him food, water, moccasins, and all the attention I could." "Good!" said her husband, and he returned to the hunters' lodge. The two men tried to make the old man enjoy himself, but he felt very bad. They asked him to tell a story and he began:—

---

<sup>1</sup>Dixit Butterfly: "Haec mulier se dedit viro seni cum ea coit.—G.L.W.

"Once there was an old spotted eagle; he was a bird, but he liked the Indians and so made himself be born among them, and lived with them as his own people. He had power to make hunters win honor marks. He always received much kindness from a young man who went up to hunt eagles at the mouth of the Yellowstone, at a place called One-cottonwood-tree hill."

The old man continued, telling how he had been treated at each of the hunting lodges, how he had come to the lodge of his son whose wife did not like him, and how the wife of the other man who had not been his close friend, had treated him kindly.

"Now," said Old-brown-man, "this old man has power to give as many eagles as he chooses to anyone he wishes to honor. This old man wishes that she who was kind to him may have kindness also and that her husband shall catch as many eagles as will give as many feathers as both he and his wife will be able to carry home. The old man loves his son as much as ever, but because of his wife's surliness, he shall catch only twelve golden eagles."

When Old-brown-man's son heard these words, he felt bad and thought to himself: "I do not like it that my wife treated this old man so badly. I do not wish to do violence here in the camp, but when I return home I will kill her."

At the end of his story, the old man shook himself, and turned into a four-spot eagle. They saw him, an eagle sitting before the skull, and knew that he had told the truth. He flew up through the smoke hole.

The next day they hunted eagles. The man, who was not Old-brown-man's adopted son, caught four eagles; but Old-brown-man's son returned without anything and felt badly. "So I feared," he thought. "That old man has mystery power. It is all my wife's fault."

Every day the two hunters, for they and their wives and a boy made the hunting party, went out to their pits. The other caught four or five eagles, but Old-brown-man's son caught an eagle only now and then. The other now said to Old-brown-man's son, "Winter is approaching. I have all the feathers that my wife and I can carry home and you have also caught some eagles. Let us go home."

They quit their hunting, killed all their eagles, and took all the eagles' wings. They started home afoot and, as they carried their food and baggage, they were heavily loaded. Old-brown-man's son, having caught but twelve eagles, was more lightly loaded than the other. The old man's son did not talk to his wife on the way, because he intended to kill her.



They had been a half day on the way when he said to his friend, "You go ahead; I want to stop here awhile." Then he called to his wife, "Wait, stop here awhile." His brother, a boy, stopped also, but he said to him, "Brother, go ahead with the others. I want to stop here with my wife." Assuming that the man wanted to stop to defecate, the others went on. When they had disappeared over a hill, the man seized his wife, saying, "I am going to kill you!" She struggled, but having made apertures under the tendons of her wrists and knees, he bound her to two posts. As she was thus bound and helpless, her husband built a fire, burned her in the face and chest and burned away her hair, and left her to die.

But Wolf now came and bit her bonds, setting her free, and doctored her so that she revived. But he could not cure her eyes which had both burst with the burning. Nor was Wolf able to restore the woman's hair.

Then Owl came and restored her eyes, but as the woman's hair was burned off, he had to get new hair for her. In the woods he got snare-in-the-woods bark (the bark fiber of our native hemp plant) and worked it fine like hair and put it on the woman's head. Her hair was now red, since that was the color of the bark fiber [presumably painted red].

Meanwhile the woman's husband had caught up with his friends. "Where is your wife?" they asked him. "Oh, she will come; go on," he answered. But his little brother asked, "Where is my sister-in-law?" "Oh, she is coming," said the man. "I will go back and meet her," said the boy. "No, she will come," said the man. But the boy persisted, and the man thought, "Well, I have killed my wife. If my brother persists and goes back and gets killed too, I do not care." And he let the boy go.

The boy retraced their route until he found his sister-in-law and was amazed to see that her looks were changed and that her hair was not as it had been before. She was now cured, but she was still weak and had not left the place where she had been bound to the posts. She was too weak to walk. "You see I am changed," the woman said. "Your brother burned me, but the wolf and the owl cured me."

While they talked they heard someone singing the eagle hunt song of the black bears. The boy wept for his sister-in-law's plight and what she had told him; but hearing the sacred snare song, he listened. The words were:—

That woman weeping, now she is sacred;  
That boy weeping, now he is sacred.

Ceasing to sing, the voice said, "You woman and boy, go back to your hunting lodge and catch all the eagles whose feathers you can carry home. I am a snare and I can make you catch eagles."

So the two, believing, returned, caught many eagles and took an abundance of feathers, as many as they were able to carry home to their village. At the camp they found plenty of food that the two hunters had abandoned when they left.

But a change came over the boy also, for the song sung by the snare had given the boy a kind of bird power, and gave him magic power so that he was able to use the bow and do hard tasks like a full-grown man. One day, a herd of buffalo came down to drink at a brook near by; the boy went down to watch them and saw a white buffalo in the herd. He told his sister-in-law and while the buffalo were drinking, the two stole up to the bank, just above. "Shoot the white one in the back, beside the backbone," the woman cried. The boy did so. The buffalo fell down and died. The woman skinned the animal with her flint knife. The two now had an abundance of meat and a very valuable hide. The woman tanned the skin and gave it to the boy.

By this time they had great bundles of eagle feathers and started home. Near the village the woman said, "Your brother is angry because I was unwise and I have suffered for my mistake. My husband tried to kill me. When we come into the village, say to your brother, 'Let us forget our past troubles and live together as before.' Then give him all your feathers and mine also." The boy found his brother and gave him the woman's message. Then he gave his brother the white buffalo robe.

But when the man saw his wife, he said, "This is not my wife. Her eyes and hair are changed and she is fatter. I am afraid to take her as my wife. She may come into my lodge and do my cooking and housework and we will live together, but I will never go near her or look upon her as my wife, for she is now one of the gods."

In the story Small-ankle told of Old-brown-man, reference is made to the custom of seizing the legs of a visitor, crying at the same time, "I have caught an eagle." It was a rule in the eagle hunting camp, that when a visitor came, each hunter would cry, "Here is someone from above!" and try to seize the visitor by the legs.

*More Eagles.* The story over, we stretched ourselves. In the morning Good-shooter went out and returned, saying, "I went out to the top of a hill and found a bad wind blowing. We all remained in camp that day, helping the women cut and dry the buffalo meat taken two days before.

The wind blew from the north the next morning, but, toward noon, it changed to the west. "Prepare to go to your pits," cried Small-ankle, "and see if you can catch any eagles. Bring your bait." When brought

to him, Small-ankle held the bait in incense and gave each hunter a snare, as before. All left but Small-ankle, Big-bull, Broom, and myself.

I went outside now and then to listen. After a time, I heard someone cry over the hills. I reported this, Small-ankle said, "Good," and he opened his sacred bundle and went through the same ceremonies as before (p. 170).

A little way from the lodge the man stopped crying. Then I heard his voice, "Here friend, take it!" "What kind is it?" I called. "A four-spot eagle." I took the eagle into the lodge and cast it to the snare. The hunter, Short-bull, entered. Small-ankle fed the bird corn ball and smoke, as he always did. He also tied (sewed) the bird's leg. "But you must pay me," he said. "I will pay you when I get back to our village," said Short-bull. I took the eagle outside and fastened it to the log under the shelter. "Friend, how many eagles did you see today," my father asked Short-bull when I returned. "I saw only this one," said Short-bull. "It circled down and settled on my bait, and I caught it. I was delighted and brought it here at once."

Not long after this I reported another voice, crying. This time I took in a young golden eagle, a fine bird with excellent feathers. I threw it to the snare and its captor, Old-bear, came in. Other events followed in the usual way.

*Sweatbath Ceremonies.* The wind, for the next four days, was from the east and we did not hunt eagles. The fifth day the men went out to hunt buffalo, leaving Small-ankle, Broom, and me in the lodge. They returned with much meat and Small-ankle said to me, "Íxtaki, I want you to make a sweatlodge, and you, No-first-finger, help him. Make the sweatlodge near the spring. Foot-bone wants to change the wind to the west and I think he can do it."

No-first-finger and I cut some good-sized June berry saplings and made the sweatlodge. We covered it and heated stones. "Do not put the stones in the sweatlodge until I tell you," Small-ankle had warned us. No-first-finger and I laid sage on the floor of the sweatlodge and cut forked sticks with which to lift the hot stones. All being ready, Small-ankle called, "My friends, join me now in the sweatbath." "We will," the young men answered.

No-first-finger and I were waiting, when Small-ankle, followed by the others, entered the sweatlodge, calling out to us, "Put in the stones, you two, as fast as you can, while I sing!" Small-ankle had his rattles.

No-first-finger and I prepared our forks, Small-ankle began to sing. Quickly I lifted a hot stone and put it through the open door of the sweat-



lodge, tossing it to the center. Small-ankle and his men sat on the sage. As the stone hurtled in, Small-ankle motioned with his rattles as if he were also throwing something into the fire pit. So he motioned again when No-first-finger tossed in a stone. We tossed in four stones in succession; each time Small-ankle motioned as at first. No-first-finger and I worked more slowly now; Small-ankle did not motion with his rattles after the fourth stone. When all the hot stones were in, No-first-finger and I handed in a bucket of water and covered the sweatlodge door.

Small-ankle sang the song used in the black bears' ceremony when entering the sweatlodge.

Wood, I guess!

Sage, I guess!

Stones, I guess!

Water, I guess!

The foregoing is as literal a translation as I can give. The words are exclamatory. More freely, the four stanzas of the song are:—

I think this must be wood!

I think this must be sage!

I think these must be stones!

I think this must be water!

This song is very old and comes down to us from the time the black bears used it in their sweatbaths on their eagle hunting trips.

Small-ankle ended his singing by shouting some vocables and then cried, "The black bears have fixed their lodge here and have made this sweatlodge which says, 'I am powerful; I will catch something with my mouth.'"

Then he made another speech, "Ha-hö'-hē! We will find a young eagle, on this black bears' sweatlodge, one of four spots, one of some spots left, and one white at both ends. We will find all these on this sweatlodge!"

This ended, Small-ankle threw water on the hot stones. "Friends," he called, "if you want to suffer and cry, do so! Or, if you want to fan yourselves as in other sweatlodges, do so!" By fanning, Small-ankle referred to the bathers beating themselves with sage. Every man in the sweatlodge, however, wanted to suffer and cry. However, they did not really suffer. As I also have done, each knelt and with head held high, he cried and mourned. This was difficult and one could not prolong his sweating very much because of the heat and the steam which hurt one's throat. Many could not do this at all.

Small-ankle poured on more water, purposely making it hard for the bathers. After thus passing through a severe bath, the bathers sometimes received dreams and visions, as they slept. Small-ankle, knowing this, made much hot steam in the sweatlodge. In a ceremonial sweatbath like this, much water was poured on the hot stones, making much hot steam; in a social sweatbath less hot steam was made.

The bathers stopped crying at last; some had vomited and some had grown hoarse with crying. "Íxtaki, open the door," Small-ankle called to me. It was too hot within for the bathers to make any more steam, although there was still water in the bucket. I opened the sweatlodge door and Small-ankle cried, "Now friends, look through the door and see yonder the eagle shelter and the green grass of next summer and fall, at about this time!" He meant the log and shelter of branches for the captive eagles; his words were a wish that the men would live to see these things again, the eagle shelter, the green grass, and a successful eagle hunt the next season. Small-ankle now called to me, "Íxtaki, cover the door again."

He poured more water on the hot stones and two or three of the bathers began to cry and mourn again. In a little while, Small-ankle called, "Now Íxtaki and No-first-finger, remove the sweatlodge cover." We did so and Small-ankle said, "My friends, Foot-bone wants you to leave this sweatlodge at whatever place you choose. You must shake your snares as you go, as if you were catching eagles." We all returned to the eagle hunting lodge and the women brought food, fresh fat buffalo meat. I brought it into the lodge and distributed it.

*Ceremonies before the Last Trial at the Pits.* When the men had finished eating, I returned the bowls to the women and Small-ankle said, "Friends, I think it is time for us to quit our eagle hunting. We will make three more hunts and then go. The sign for ceasing has come, a little ice forming on the water."

It was now evening and Small-ankle put on his snare necklace, took his rattles, and bade me bring coals to the incense place. He burned sage, held the rattles in the smoke, and then, shaking his rattles, began to sing. I have forgotten the song, but I think it was an appeal to the wind to blow favorably.

When he had finished singing, he took the ceremonial pipe, and holding the bowl thrust forward and toward the south in his right hand and the stem in his left, he cried, "I wish the wind that blows from the south would go around to the west and come this way (towards us)."

I do not remember if the wind was really blowing from the south that night, but I suspect that it was.

"Good-shooter," Small-ankle now called, "fill one of the common pipes and place it before me." Good-shooter obeyed. Small-ankle took up the pipe and holding it with stem pointing to the sacred bundle (upon the skull) called, "Foot-bone, smoke! You have power. We will soon close our hunting and we want you to help us catch some more eagles. Ice will soon form and it is your rule that when ice forms you fear the eagles will freeze their feet. You have strong power, yet for some reason you fear this thing. Therefore summon all your power and help us catch some more eagles while there is yet time. And now, *Íxtąki*," he called to me, "fetch me a coal."

I put a coal before him; he lighted the pipe and smoked. "Now," he said, "the smoke in this pipe belongs to Foot-bone. Good-shooter, come first and smoke." Good-shooter did as bidden, stepping over the snake pillow, but between the fire pit and the door. Small-ankle held the pipe with both hands and Good-shooter himself grasped it with his right hand as he smoked.

Good-shooter's helper then smoked, and, one by one, all the others, each returning afterwards to his place. I also approached and touched the pipe, but did not smoke. But I gave thanks, saying "*ahö*," as did the others, meaning "thank you." Each of the smokers also asked for what he wanted.<sup>1</sup> I asked, "I want feathers to plume my arrows." Good-shooter, I have said, stepped over the snake stick. As Foot-bone was regarded as chief of the hunting lodge, when we smoked to him, ordinary rules were suspended.

When all had smoked and the pipe was smoked out, Small-ankle said, "Good-shooter, take the pipe and thrust the ashes on the pile of ashes. They belong to Foot-bone. But fill the pipe again and place it before me. I will sing how the snare-in-the-woods grows and becomes a snare. For we have asked Foot-bone to put forth all his power that we may catch more eagles, because our time is short."

Good-shooter filled the common pipe again and laid it before Small-ankle. The latter asked me for a coal, burned incense, held his rattles in the smoke and sang, shaking his rattles but not beating them together. He sang: "Come up from the earth and grow just a sprout!"

Then he cried, "The black bear fixed his lodge and then sang his snare song, how it grew; because he wants to catch more eagles." He sang a second time, the words meaning, "The snare-in-the-woods has now grown green," following this with the same recitation, "The black

---

<sup>1</sup>Apparently each man asked his wish, smoked, and then thanked Foot-bone.—G. L. W. .



bear has fixed his lodge, etc." He sang a third time. "It comes from the earth and begins to turn yellow," following with the recitation, "The black bear has fixed his lodge, etc."

He sang a fourth time, "That which came from the earth has fallen down and turned rotten!" Following this with the recitation, "The black bear, etc."

This song concluded, Small-ankle sang:—

The black medicine snare said,  
"If they shake me and throw me in any direction,  
I easily close the loop!"

Then again, he sang:—

In the woods, the big medicine said,  
"If they shake me and throw me in any direction,  
I easily close the loop!"

Still continuing, he sang other songs, but of vocables only.

Small-ankle now ceased singing, put away his rattles, held his pipe to the sacred bundle and skull, and talked to Foot-bone, praying that we might catch more eagles. "For the river will soon be frozen over," he said, "and I know you are afraid of that. We want to observe your rules, therefore let more favorable winds come that we may catch more eagles."

We Hidatsa believed it a bad omen when ice froze on the waters, to keep on hunting eagles; for the eagles would freeze their feet and something would happen to the leader of the hunt. Some relative of his would die, or one of the hunters would die; so the proper way was to quit hunting as soon as ice formed.

No-first-finger now brought his gun, powder horn, and shot bag and gave them to Small-ankle saying, "I wish you to renew prayers on my bait. I want to catch more eagles. I pay you this gun for your prayers." "Good," answered Small-ankle. "I have no power to promise you eagles, but these sacred objects here can hear us. Tomorrow I will attend to your bait." By sacred objects he meant the sacred bundle and the buffalo skull on which the sacred bundle lay.

"It is now late," said Small-ankle, "let us stretch ourselves." But before we did so one of the men came in saying, "Old-male-black-bear, the wind is moving. I felt something touch my face, either snow or rain." "Good," said Small-ankle, "if the wind is moving (blowing) from the west, that is just what we asked of Foot-bone."

*Small-ankle prays over the Bait.* In the morning Good-shooter, went out and returned, saying. "Old-male-black-bear, there is a good wind from the west. Cottonwood seeds are flying now." This last was

an eagle hunting term meaning that snow was falling. "Good," cried Small-ankle, "that is what we asked yesterday of Foot-bone."

I went out and found the ground nearly covered with snow. Returning, I stirred the fire and Small-ankle called to the men, "Come, get up. Bring your bait, No-first-finger." "The snow must now cover all the pit covers," said one. "No matter," said Small-ankle. "Foot-bone says it is a good day to hunt."

No-first-finger brought in his bait, which Small-ankle held toward the west, singing a powerful mystery song, one he had not yet used. The words were: "The female has gotten back!" The meaning was, that a female eagle had at last returned. It was a very powerful song and never failed to bring eagles. Small-ankle sang it slowly and carefully.

He returned the bait to No-first-finger with a snare. He also held all the other bait in the smoke, returning each to its owner with a snare; but he did not sing the mystery song again.

All the hunters departed. Small-ankle, Big-bull, Broom, and I stayed in the lodge as usual.

"I will sing again," said Small-ankle. "I fear this snow may not melt in time, for the season is now late." He put on his snare necklace and tied a little strip of black bearskin on each hand and sang a long time; so long, that I thought surely he would sing all his songs! Ending the songs, he swept his rattles up his arms in the usual way and put them away. Then he prayed for his men to have success.

It was still snowing, enough to show one's tracks plainly. "Let us go out and see how the eagles fare," said Small-ankle. We two boys and Big-bull went outside with Small-ankle to the eagle shelter; the birds looked cold and their feathers were wet. "Cut some small trees and make the windbreak thicker," said Small-ankle. "That is what we always have to fear, that the eagles may freeze." I think there were but two eagles under the shelter, all the others having been taken to the pits for decoys. The eagles had been fed with meat, each owner tending his own eagles. The meat was thrust on a stick, four or five feet long, and held out to the eagle; or it was cut in strips and laid at the bird's feet.

*Use of Decoy Eagles.* When a hunter wanted to use a captured eagle for a decoy, he threw his robe or saddle-skin over the bird, forcing it breast down to the ground, as was done when the eagle was first captured at the pit. As the skin fell over it the eagle would go *ts-ts-ts-ts!* In later years, a blanket replaced a saddle-skin. The eagle was wrapped in the skin like a baby, its legs forced together and crossed and bent back to the tail. The saddle-skin went skin side to the eagle because the bird

often cast out its bowels on the way. The eagle was borne to the pit, with head to the left as in Fig. 14a; but eagles were also carried on the back.

The saddle-skin commonly used to tie up eagles was cut from a buffalo's belly. Four holes were pierced in [the edge of] the skin for the thongs that bound it about the eagle. When the latter was packed on the back, the eagle was borne, not head erect like a baby, but like a log;

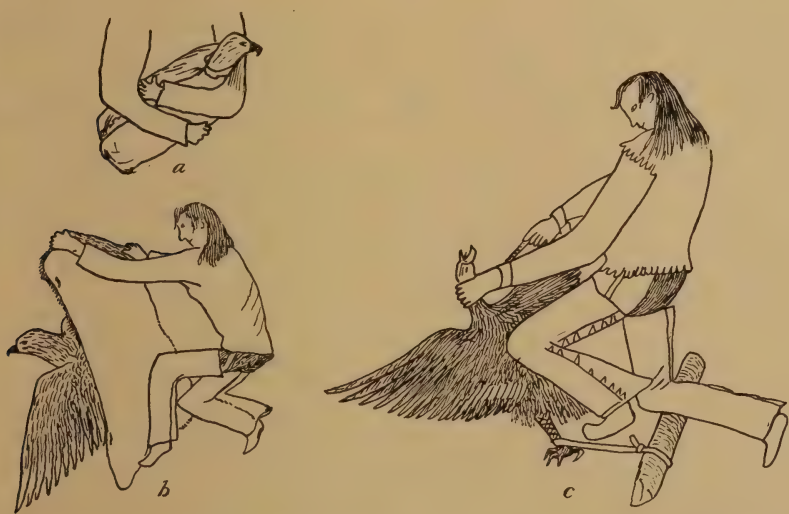


Fig. 14. *a*, Manner of carrying Eagle to the Pit when the Bird was used as a Decoy; *b*, Throwing the Robe over the Eagle, preparatory to choking It; *c*, Strangling the Eagle with a Noose.

for a hunter sometimes carried both his decoy eagle and his bait to the pit. I myself thought better to show more kindness to the eagle, bearing it in my arms and crying, "My god, I want to catch more eagles."

At the pit, the decoy eagle<sup>1</sup> was fastened near the bait to a stake of wood from which ran a thong to the eagle's foot; but I have seen a buffalo's vertebra with its long bony process used instead of a stake. There was a hole in the vertebra through which the thong could be run. No small log was laid for the eagle to sit upon.

A piece of fresh meat, about as large as one's two fists, usually the tough meat of a buffalo's neck, was placed near the eagle for food. The

<sup>1</sup>Curtis remarks that the first eagle captured was used as a decoy and continues "as eagle after eagle lit they were caught in turn and choked to death with a rawhide rope." (*ibid.*, vol. 4, 137.)



decoy eagle readily ate this. If soft or tender meat were used, magpies got the greater part of it. In spite of the fact that they were afraid of the eagle, the magpies were such thieves that they stole meat from under the eagle's nose. They used to come around in great numbers whenever an eagle was staked out at the pit.

When a decoy eagle saw another eagle a long way off it would go *ts-ts-ts*; the hunter in the pit, knowing an eagle was coming, prepared for its capture.

An eagle fastened to a stake as a decoy, sat quietly, not struggling or trying to escape. When eagles flew over head, the hunter in his pit thought it a good sign if the magpies flew away soon after they were sighted; for it was likely that an eagle was descending to the bait, thus frightening the magpies.

Captured eagles were rather tame, timid, because subdued by the magic of the snares. Eagles but newly brought in from the pit appeared almost half dead; yet when put on the log under the eagle shelter, they soon began to eat.

*Putting Blood on the Bait.* The bait, a stuffed rabbit we will say lay near the pit as already described (in Fig. 6). On the upper side of the bait was bound a piece of buffalo lung to make it look as if an eagle had been tearing at it. A little sack filled with blood, and made of that part of a buffalo's paunch that looks shaggy or hairy, hung in a tree outside the lodge. It was taken down and blood poured over the piece of lung to make it look red, each morning when the hunters started to the pits. Deer or antelope blood did just as well as buffalo blood.

Before noon we heard someone crying. Small-ankle hastened to get out his rattle, burned incense, and sang until we heard some one at the door of the lodge. "Íxtaki, díwats!" called a voice. "What kind?" I answered. "A young one." It was a fine young golden eagle. I took it in and cast it over the snare. "Íxtaki díwats!" cried the hunter again; it was No-first-finger. "What kind?" I called. "Only two center feathers turned four-spots," he answered, meaning that the bird was only just beginning to turn old. Eagles have twelve tail feathers; and in this bird, only the two middle feathers had turned.

Small-ankle ceremonially fed the two eagles with a corn ball and gave them smoke with the ceremonial pipe. He was even rough with them, poking them on the head with the stem of the pipe. "It is Foot-bone," he cried, "who has caught these." The women brought No-first-finger food and Small-ankle asked him, "Now do you want me to tie one foot?" "Yes," answered No-first-finger, "I want you to fix the foot of each of

the eagles. I am very glad you prayed for me. I have nothing more at home that I can pay you. I want to ask you to take that eagle that has two spotted and ten unspotted feathers and that will cover all further charges you may make."

No-first-finger took the two newly-caught eagles to the shelter. When he returned he told us what happened at his pit. "Not long after I arrived at my pit, that eagle with two spotted feathers came and soon after, the young eagle came. I was very glad and returned here to the lodge. The pit cover is covered with snow."

"Yes," said Small-ankle, "we sometimes shake the cover frame and the snow falls through. The hunter within then gathers up the fallen snow and piles it up at one end of his pit. Unless he does this he cannot see upward through the cover frame."

That No-first-finger had caught eagles was not strange, for the mystery song which Small-ankle had sung had great power. He once sang that song when he and I were together in an eagle camp and an eagle came at once, before he had gotten to the pit, so that we failed to catch it.

And now we heard another hunter crying. My father burned incense and sang the bird-receiving song while I waited at the left of the door. The crying ceased a little way off and a voice cried, "Íxtaki díwats!" "Tapatsi?" I answered, "what kind?" "Aduṗčei tó'pat's—spots four," came the answer. I cast the bird to the snare and Small-ankle fed it with corn ball and gave it smoke. Short-bull had caught it. "Small-ankle," he said, "sew up the eagle's foot and I will pay you my rawhide rope that I have never yet used." He took the eagle out to the shelter.

The other hunters came home without any captures. "Snow lay so thick on our cover frames," they said, "that we could not see the birds."

We ate, I returned the bowls, and Small-ankle said: "Now we have caught three more eagles. Foot-bone says that the hunting is closed, because he is afraid the snow may turn to ice and the rivers freeze to-night. So I want all of you to have one last good time. All you boys must dance tonight. You must dance hard."

We danced that evening and all who had caught eagles were happy; those who had not, were sad. They rather wanted to go to the pits again. "We might catch some more eagles tomorrow," they said, "and we have not finished drying our hides." But they could do nothing for Foot-bone had spoken and what Foot-bone said could not be altered. Such was our custom. What my father gave, as said by Foot-bone, made us all afraid.

"Now Good-shooter," said Small-ankle, "the first thing in the morning, you put to sleep every one of those eagles we have caught. I will let you have the snare to put around the necks of the birds to put them to sleep and I will send them home. Then we will gather wood and dry the meat and hides by a fire and prepare to return to the village."

Putting the eagles to sleep meant to kill them. When on an eagle hunt we never said "go to sleep" of ourselves, for fear we might have the fate of the eagles. "Let us all stretch ourselves," said Small-ankle; we went to bed.

*Putting the Eagles to Sleep.* It was nearly daylight when we awoke the next morning. It had stopped snowing during the night but the snow now lay quite deep. The wind was in the south. Small-ankle and the others arose. Small-ankle opened his sacred bundle, took out a snare about as thick as my first finger and as long as my forearm. It had a running noose at one end and was all painted red.

"Now," he said, "each one who has caught eagles, take a snare." And he gave each a snare like that described. "When you want to put your eagles to sleep," he said, "throw your robe over the bird. The eagle will get excited. Open the robe a little and let out the bird's head then slip the noose of your snare over it, and putting your knee on the eagle's back, draw the noose, and choke the eagle." In Fig. 14b Goodbird shows how the robe was thrown over the bird; in Fig. 14c, he shows how the eagle was killed (put to sleep).<sup>1</sup>

"When the eagle is asleep," continued Small-ankle, "let each man take his bird down by the spring, shovel the snow from the ground and lay it down, with breast to the ground, facing the west. I will then come and turn the birds to the east when I am ready to cut (sic) them."

Having thus instructed those having eagles, he gave each one a snare and a piece of black medicine. "Chew this up," he said of the latter, "and blow it over you. These birds have dangerous powers and might hurt you." The men did as bidden, rubbing the chewed black medicine over the parts they could not reach [by blowing?].

Then, as bidden, they went out, caught the eagles, and strangled them.<sup>2</sup> They did this rapidly and swiftly, neither crying nor mourning

<sup>1</sup>Grinnell (vol. 1, 299-307) describes three methods of capturing eagles used by the Cheyenne. In the first of these, common in the early part of the nineteenth century, after the preliminary ceremonies, the hunter covered himself with eagle grease colored red and went to the pit, where he fasted. When the eagle alighted on the pit, the catcher grasped it by the legs and immediately strangled it with a buffalo hair rope or bowstring. The bird is carried home, hung on a scaffold with the others caught, until the feathers are plucked. Then the bodies are carried off to some distant place and abandoned.

<sup>2</sup>When an eagle was to be strangled, it was caught by throwing a robe or saddle-skin over it; but this was cast away during the actual strangling. The man kept one knee on the bird's back pressing the heart against the ground and causing death by this double method. The bird did not struggle or flap its wings excessively. As they were strangled the eagles opened their mouths somewhat, but not very much.

No prayers were made by those who strangled the eagles. We hunters thought, we had the power of the bears with us; without this we should have been afraid to strangle the eagles.—Wolf-chief.



as they did so. Each carried his dead bird down by the spring. I remember that one man carried his eagle in his arm, and another, by the feet with the wings hanging down. They laid the birds<sup>1</sup> in a row, side by side, where the snow was scraped away, facing the west. There were eight or nine eagles, I think.

The men returned to the lodge bringing the snares with which they had strangled the birds, to Small-ankle. "Get ready," the latter said. Opening his sacred bundle he put on his snare necklace, took his big pipe and said, "Good-shooter, Foot-bone tells me that not far away is a Sioux camp. Go out and spy which side of the camp is nearest us that we may charge them. Foot-bone, I pray you that you excite these enemies so that there will be no danger to us."

Good-shooter went out, and returned saying, "Old-male-black-bear, not far from here to the west is the enemy, not many but few!" "Now boys," cried Small-ankle, "go outside, and we will fight them." He followed them outside. "Stand in a half circle," he said, "facing the west." As they stood thus, he came in front of them. He carried the sacred pipe and a knife, held together in his hands. He held the pipe stem forward and up; the knife, which was painted red, he held blade up, with a bunch of sage tied to it.

Small-ankle sang low, not wishing the enemy to hear him: "Ha-ho, ha-hö'-o-o-! Foot-bone says those enemies are not dangerous. They are excited. So run fast! Let every man strike an enemy. For everyone who thus makes a strike, will likely afterwards strike an [real] enemy. Run hard. Let every man pull out some of the soft feathers from under the tail of his eagle."

We all ran fast. Three men, very swift of foot, got ahead of me. Small-ankle followed us, walking slowly. As each man made his strike, he cried out as if for an enemy, "A-he." And all pulled out white feathers from under the tail, not, however, from under the wings. These feathers had little practical use, but were valuable as offerings to the gods, or in case of the adoption of a child, [in the sacred child adoption?] or if in a dream one was directed to wear them.

As the leader now came forward, one of the hunters cried out to him, "Old-male-black-bear, we have killed eight or nine enemies and not one of us has been hurt!"

In pulling out the feathers, we had drawn the birds out of line and they now lay scattered over the ground. Using the pipe and knife,

<sup>1</sup>Miss Densmore states that the eagles were strangled with twine made of tough wood fiber, and then, following a ceremony which was not described to her, the eagles were buried and pieces of new cloth were placed with native tobacco on the grave (*ibid.*, 64.).

Small-ankle rolled the birds about, at the same time crying, ho-ho-ho!—vocables, as if in defiance of the enemy. Having thus rolled the dead birds into line again but, facing the east, he put his pipe down on the ground before the birds.

Going behind them and beginning at one end of the line and in the meantime, singing the knife song, Small-ankle cut off the birds' wings. He took a long time at this for the rule was that the bones must not be marked or scratched by the knife; the cuts must be made through the joints only. Small-ankle put the wings in a pile behind the eagles.

Having finished his task, Small-ankle stood behind the birds and, holding the pipestem forward, cried, "Light the pipe, birds, and smoke, and go to your homes. Foot-bone offers you this pipe to smoke. He says you must not look backward as you go home nor feel badly against us, your friends. Foot-bone says that each time you stop you will find fat animals to eat. At the fourth rest at the big bend in the Missouri River in the southeast you will find the doe of some animal, with tender flesh to eat." \*

This big bend of which Small-ankle spoke is more than a hundred miles below Standing Rock. A point or tongue of land more than twelve miles long and a mile wide across the neck projects into the water where there is a high hill. My father once portaged across this neck of land.

"Thus," continued Small-ankle addressing the dead eagles, "you birds will get home in four rests." Then addressing us, "We will leave the birds' bodies here as they are. We will take the feathers. We will make a sweatbath in the sweatlodge and I will pile the feathers up by the door and brush them off so as to deprive them of their eagle power."

The men gathered up the wings and, returning to the hunting lodge, piled them up in the eagle shelter. All came into the lodge and we ate. The sun by this time had risen above the trees.

The bowls were returned to the women outside and Small-ankle said: "Good-shooter, cut a chokecherry stick about the size of a sweatlodge stick and longer than an Indian fathom. Shave off the bark in sections of about four inches so that alternate strips of bark and peeled wood will appear the length of the stick. Leave a few branches on the top and on the bottom tie a bunch of the short broad-leaved sage. Then bind this stick (Fig. 15a) over the sweatlodge door, before the cover is put on, as if it were part of the frame."

"İxtaki," he continued, "go into the sweatlodge and remove all the old used bunches of sage left there after the last sweating. Dig this old sage from the snow and clean the sweatlodge out, putting in new sage for us to sit on."

"And now friends," he said to the company, "everybody help gather wood and heat the stones!"

*The Sweatbath and Ceremonies.* When the stones were heated and all was ready, Small-ankle led the way to the sweatlodge and laid his sacred objects on the ground before it. We all sat in a half circle before a fire that burned in front of the sweatlodge and in which the stones had been heated. "Good-shooter," said Small-ankle, "fill up a common pipe." He too was sitting in the half circle.

Small-ankle took the pipe and held it toward the sacred objects, stem forward, saying, "Now Foot-bone, smoke and send those timid birds away without their making any trouble for us." By timid birds he

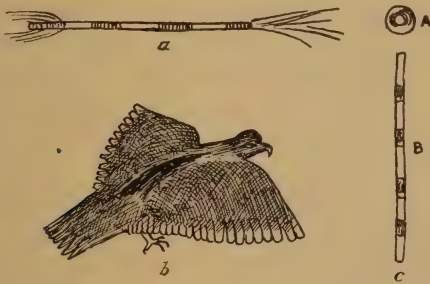


Fig. 15. *a*, A Peeled Stick to which Broad-Leafed Sage has been bound, Ready for tying over the Sweatlodge Door; *b*, Fringe-wing, the Chief of the Eagles; *c*, Stone and Stick for Stick and Round Stone Gambling Game.

meant the eagles. Then he lighted the pipe with a coal, smoked, and passed the pipe to the others. All smoked.

"Some of you go and get a tent skin," said Small-ankle, "and cover the sweatlodge." Two or three arose and did so. "Two or three of you get forked sticks," said Small-ankle, "and when I go into the sweatlodge, throw the stones in with the forks." He removed his shirt, leggings, and moccasins, and with his snare necklace on and his big ceremonial pipe in his hand, went in alone, carrying a big bunch of straight sage in his hand. "We are ready, boys," he called, "take your forks in hand."

Two arose and with their forks put the hot stones in the sweatlodge, while Small-ankle sang the stone song. Sometimes, as they tossed in the stones, Small-ankle motioned with his pipe as if he too were casting stones into the pit made for them. He sang until all the stones were in the pit in the center of the sweatlodge. He was still alone in the sweatlodge; the others sat around the fire outside.



"Now, *İxtaki*," called Small-ankle, "go and bring out the buffalo skull. Put it on the ground before the sweatlodge door, facing the door." I did as bidden. "*İxtaki*," he called again, "fetch me a bowl of water." I did so, handing the bowl in to him. "Now," said Small-ankle, "put my sacred objects on the buffalo skull and watch that they do not fall off." These sacred objects lay on the ground spread out on a piece of skin. I lifted them just as they were and laid them on the skull which was near the door opening. Small-ankle sat at the right of the door. He had not yet poured the water on the hot stones. The sweatlodge faced the east, although there was no rule, I believe, that demanded this. With the sweatlodge door open, Small-ankle sang a mystery song. As he sang, he dipped a bunch of sage in the water and sprinkled the sacred objects. His song was, "Water, I guess!" Then he called, "*İxtaki*, show your face here!" I put my face close to the door and he dipped the sage in water and said, "Draw water from this sage into your mouth and spit it on the hot stones." I did so. He made me do this four times. "Now you will feel light," he said. "If any heavy power is upon you, this will remove it, for this deed is sacred."

I was the servant of the lodge. As all the eagles had passed through my hands, I was the one most exposed to their mystery power and for this reason was the first to be cleansed. "Take the sacred objects," said Small-ankle, "and put them on the ground behind the skull again." I did so. "Now, friends," said Small-ankle, "fetch your bird wings and tail feathers, and I will cleanse them. Each must pay me something, each man announcing what he will pay. Also, put some dried meat in front of the feathers for the birds to eat, on their way to their home."

The men brought the wings and laid them back of the skull, as if facing the lodge, laying the wings upon the ground and the tails upon them. Each man laid a big piece of meat brought from the camp behind the feathers, for each one had his own pile of meat, the product of his own hunting. All these were the successful hunters.

One now came to Small-ankle and said, "When I get back home I will give you one of my two wings." Another said, "I have already paid you one whole eagle." "I know it," answered Small-ankle. And so each man made his obligation.

"All you men," Small-ankle now said, "stand in a half circle and hold out your palms (knuckles down, as if to receive something), before the sweatlodge door. I want to brush you off and cleanse you." They stood before the sweatlodge door. Small-ankle dipped sage in a bowl of water and sprinkled every hand and brushed it off. "This will make you

light," he said, "and take away heaviness and the power obtained in the eagle pits and in these ceremonies." Then the women were called and they held out their hands likewise.

"Íxtaki," Small-ankle called, "bring me my rattles. I must now send the eagles away and brush them off." I fetched the rattles. Small-ankle took them, sang many songs, and then said, "Foot-bone, send these timid birds to their homes."

I have forgotten the order of his speech, but he told the birds again that they would rest four times and that each time at each resting place they would eat fat animals. And he named each resting place in turn.

At first, Small-ankle sang quite fast, now he sang slowly, stately, as he dipped his sage in the water and sprinkled the wings. He finished and cried, "Now everybody beat the camp tent with something, sticks, small logs, stones, anything! The eagles are now going to start to fly. Make a noise to frighten them, so they will go!—There," he cried a little later, "they are gone now."

"And now friends," he continued, "Foot-bone says, 'Take off your clothes and come into the sweatlodge and you will become light and will reach home safely.'" All did as he suggested and went into the sweatlodge, except Broom and me, for whom there was no room. "Now I will sing," said Small-ankle, "you men may cry as sufferers, if you wish. When we have ended our sweating, I will brush off the hunting lodge and the snake sticks. I will send the stick offerings whither the birds have gone, and all will have been finished."

I had handed in a pail of water for use in the sweating; for the bowl of water was only for the cleansing. After the bathers went in, I covered the sweatlodge door at my father's bidding, drawing the skin door so as to cover up the buffalo skull also. The skull lay with its nose in the doorway, and I had but to draw the door skin so that it would enclose the skull.

The sweating continued until all the water in the pail was used up, when Small-ankle called, "Íxtaki, open the door." All the fasters (or sufferers) within ceased crying. I opened the door. It was very hot inside. Some had vomited; others were nearly overcome. The steam had been too much for them. "Look out of this door," cried Small-ankle to the men within, "Foot-bone promises that next year, in the fall, you will see yellow leaves again just as you do now, and all other things!" The men thanked Small-ankle, saying "I shall see autumn next year and eat wild, plums and chokecherries, and be happy." "Íxtaki," called Small-ankle, "cover the door again." I did so. Small-ankle called to the sweaters,

"Foot-bone says 'Enjoy yourselves and fan yourselves as you will.'" All the men took the bunches of sage on which they sat and with these beat and fanned and whipped themselves.

The sweaters came out and I removed the sweatlodge cover. "Remove the skull and put it there," said Small-ankle. As bidden, I removed the skull from the door of the sweatlodge and put it back on the ground beside the sacred objects. And now as at the first, the skull, the sacred objects, and the snares lay on the ground a short distance before the sweatlodge door.

"Get my corn ball," cried Small-ankle. I brought out the corn ball loaf, a mass as big as my two fists, and now rather hard. "Now that the birds have gone home, I must fetch my sacred objects," said Small-ankle. "Each of you also take a piece of the corn ball for your share." He put a small lump of the corn ball loaf before the feathers of each bird, saying, "Foot-bone gives you a last corn ball. Eat and go home. Do not look back. Go on. Do not harm your friends."

Then he lighted the big pipe. "Friends," he said, "I have given smoke to these birds, but Foot-bone says, 'Let your friends smoke and they will get light' [be relieved from the heaviness of the eagles' mystery power.]" He lighted and passed the pipe to the men. All smoked and gave thanks to their leader, Small-ankle.

He cut off good-sized pieces of the corn ball loaf and gave one to each man. The women were called and he gave each of them a piece. When all had eaten, Small-ankle said, "Now friends, receive your feathers." "Good," they answered. All arose and each received his own property. Small-ankle received in pay, already promised him, one whole feather tail and five wings.

"Íxtaki," he said, "bring me those meats offered to these birds. Foot-bone says they were offered to him; therefore, they are mine to eat. Foot-bone has sent the timid birds home. And now friends," he continued, "stay here while I go into the hunting lodge and cleanse it. I will call you when I have finished."

He entered the lodge, but soon called, "Íxtaki, bring the buffalo skull." I took it to the door and gave it to Small-ankle and returned to the fire outside. We heard Small-ankle singing in the lodge, apparently passing from one place to another. In a little while, he reappeared at the door and called, "Good-shooter, come in here." He entered, but soon came out again bringing the snake sticks.

"Now," called Small-ankle, "all who caught eagles, come in." They entered, Good-shooter with them; but Good-shooter soon came out



bearing the buffalo skull, which he carried by the horns, face toward him.

The other men gathered up the stick offerings and the snares on the wall and, followed by Good-shooter, all went to the place where the dead birds lay, piled all these sacred objects beside the carcasses and returned to the lodge. "Now," called Small-ankle, "all the rest of you boys come into the lodge also. We have now ended the hunt." I gathered up the dried meat, tied it into a bundle, and bore it into the lodge. "It is all over," cried Small-ankle. "Make yourselves at home in the hunting lodge. You who are married may now go back to sleep with your wives. All sacredness is here done away with now."

*Last Days in Camp.* The men tied their eagle tail feathers in grass mats and hung them up in trees; the eagle wings, tied in pairs were also hung in the trees, swung over the branches. I was greatly pleased that my father had received so many feathers, for I thought I should get some of them for my arrows. These feathers, as I have said, my father received as pay.

We remained in camp about ten days longer, drying our skins and meat. My father and I each had two packages of dried meat to take home; the others had big loads of skins and meat on their ponies. My father and I were also given two buffalo hides.

We returned to the village safely after camping five times.

We had our eagle trapping camp at a place called Shot-nose, a hill on this side of what is now called Shafer's, on the north side of the Little Missouri.

I was about fifteen when I went in this eagle hunt; I went on my first war party afterwards.

The following, added afterwards by Wolf-chief, is here inserted as it seems a little uncertain just where it should be placed in the text.

I have forgotten to say that when Small-ankle wanted to brush off the magic powers from the men he said, "Give me a dish or bowl." They gave him one of iron, and he put the corn balls into it and set it by him. Then he took the big ceremonial pipe and said to the dead eagles, "Foot-bone gives you this last smoke. He has sent your spirits away, but to your bodies he gives this last smoke. As I say, go right on. Do not stop nor look back. Do not hurt us. Be glad you have had a good smoke."

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

*Migrating Eagles.*<sup>1</sup> When I was younger I have seen eagles descending the Missouri River. They flew very high, in pairs, not in flocks; each pair also came alone, not accompanied by other pairs. One of the two eagles of a pair would fly ahead, the other perhaps a quarter of a mile behind. When they came to a prominent hill, they would very likely stop and circle about it once or twice. Then, they would flap their wings, then sail awhile.

Whether the two of a pair were male and female I do not know. They would [likely] be young birds and the sex was not discernible. There was no way for us to determine the sex of eagles, except in nesting time when the female would be on the nest and the male on a hill near by.

*Goodbird and the Old Eagle Pit.*<sup>2</sup> The pit used by Packs-wolf's father about 1885, was about two and a half feet deep. Goodbird said an eagle pit should be about five feet square (the measurements of the present pit) and three and a half or four feet deep, permitting the hunter to sit with his head free of the cover.

The pit<sup>3</sup> was dug in the earth, the dirt walls being sufficiently strong to prevent a cave-in. After it was abandoned, the rains and winter's snows were apt to cause the pit walls to cave in, so that if the pit were used a second year, the walls had to be rebuilt with stones and small logs or poles. In the pit here described, the small logs and stones were still embedded in the walls. Some of the sticks that made the frame of the cover remained.

A small stone lying on the ground near by, Goodbird thought might be the "eagle stone." It was the size of one's fist and was placed in a sacred hole a foot under the surface of the ground (apparently in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Related by Goodbird, or Tsakáka-sá'kié, an Hidatss and son of Maxidi-wáac, born about 1869.

<sup>2</sup>This account was given me by Goodbird on a visit we made by wagon to the pits described, in the summer of 1910. It was written after our return to camp.—G. L. W.

<sup>3</sup>Remains of old eagle pits have been reported in the Missouri River region with considerable frequency. George F. Will (this series, vol. 22, 298) states that old eagle pits are found along the bluffs of the Missouri and its tributaries, as well as in the Bad Lands and Hills. Usually, in the bottom of the pit may be found some of the sticks and sod which ordinarily composed the covering screen.

The same author ("Some Observations made in Northwestern South Dakota," *American Anthropologist*, N.S. vol. 11, 257-269, 1909, 260) has also described two old eagle pits at Slim Buttes, South Dakota. These were hollowed out of sandstone, were 3½ feet deep, 4 feet long, and 2 feet wide, and in the bottom were scattered sticks, probably the remnants of the cover screen.

A. Hrdlicka ("Indian Trap Pits along the Missouri" *American Anthropologist*, N.S. vol. 18, 546-547, 1916) has also noted shallow circular depressions, about 5 feet in diameter, scattered along the slopes of low hills flanking the Missouri in South Dakota. These also contained fragments of cedar rafters. The Sioux living in the immediate vicinity claimed that both eagles and hawks were caught in these pits.

Miss Densmore visited a long abandoned eagle pit when recording Mandan music. "The trap is situated on the western slope of a butte. . . . The spot selected for the trap was a small bench, or bit of comparatively level land, not much larger than the trap itself. Weeds and brush had filled the hollow, but these were easily cut away and the writer descended into it. The hollow was found to be 3 feet deep and less than 4 feet in width. It was intended that the proportions of the trap should be such that when a man was seated in it his head would be only a little below the brush matting, thus enabling him to reach up and grasp the feet of the eagle." (Densmore, *ibid.*, 62.)

pit's wall), on a bunch of sage. The Hidatsa name of the stone is *mī'-daka*, from *mī'*, stone, and *dāka*, the young of an animal, as a colt or calf.

The hunter sat in an eagle pit on a bunch of grass, with his head to the north, his feet to the south. A stuffed, white jack rabbit or stuffed coyote was placed outside for bait, with the lung of a buffalo secured near by. Fresh blood was poured over the lung each day. The bait lay on the west side of the pit.

The pit was always dug on a promontory into the Missouri River, or between two points where eagles were likely to fly, looking for food. Pits might be dug on either side of the Missouri, but always on bluffs that faced the west, since eagles always came down on a west wind.

The pit cover was made of small poles that crossed one another like lattice work and was covered with small brush and grass. The hunter raised the cover with his head.

The hunter tied the feet and wings of the eagle and carried it to the camp in the timber.

If only one or two eagles were caught, they might be released after the tail feathers had been plucked. If a larger number were caught, some of them would be killed for the wings to make fans and plume arrows.

Three eagle tails yielded enough feathers to make one war-bonnet, or *maicu-mapuka* (eagle-hat).

*The Buffalo Pit.* Not far from the eagle pit Goodbird showed me another pit.

Goodbird said all the Indians agreed that this was a buffalo pit, and was used probably by members of some eagle hunters' camp, who did not want to lose time hunting buffalo when they were busy hunting eagles. The pit would thus supply them with meat.

Buffalo, Goodbird said, always avoided crossing a coulée if possible. A herd coming up between two coulées would probably lose one of its number in the pit.

Antelope, Goodbird added, were taken in the same kind of a pit. Like buffalo, they preferred to follow a ridge and avoid crossing a coulée.



### STORY OF FRINGE-WING<sup>1</sup>

Speaking of eagles' hurting a hunter in the pit as sometimes happened, and of Small-ankle's custom of entertaining us in the evening with stories, I will relate one of the Black-bear stories he told. It is a tale of an eagle stealing a boy away from his father.

A black bear was out hunting eagles. He always took his son, a small boy, with him to his pit. This little boy would put his paw out over the edge of the pit. When an eagle saw it, the bird was sure to come down; but before the eagle could even touch the boy's paw (or hand) the father caught the eagle. For these two, the bear and his son, had mystery power to do this. They caught many eagles in this way.

"Father," said the boy one day, "I want to go out to the eagle pit alone. I know now how to catch eagles. I have seen you do it!" "No," said the father, "those birds have great mystery power and they will make you sleep and so carry you away." But the boy begged and begged until his father let him go. The boy went to the pit, held out his hand, and fell asleep.

When the boy did not return, his father went out to see what had happened to him; the pit was empty. "I know who has harmed my boy," cried the father. "It is an eagle that is ever seeking to vanquish me. She has stolen my son away." What the black bear man said was true, for this is what had happened. There was an eagle that was not really an eagle at all. She was chief of all the other eagles and her name was Ícu-atícia-híak-naxáwi (Wing-tent-skin-like-fringe) or Wing-like-fringed-tent-skin. Perhaps we may translate freely, Fringe-wing.

Fringe-wing was<sup>a</sup> a supernatural being; like an eagle having no feathers. Her wings and body were covered with a skin that looked much like old tent skin, and the edges of her wings and tail where the long feathers stand out, were fringed; hence, the name she bore. Her shape was like an eagle's with an eagle's beak, but she had a high forehead like a man's. She was larger than the other eagles (Fig. 15b).

Fringe-wing was an enemy of the black bear man. She had sent other eagles to his pit to spy and they had found the boy alone. "Go and take him," said Fringe-wing. "You will find the boy sleeping." The eagles found the boy asleep as promised; and they brought him to their chief, Fringe-wing.

The bear-man, finding his pit empty, went around, crying and mourning to the gods; but he did not find his son. "I will hunt for that

---

<sup>1</sup>Related by Wolf-chief.

eagle, Fringe-wing, in the fall," said the bear man. So, in the autumn of the next year, when the leaves were turning yellow, he went eagle hunting. He filled his big wooden pipe, for he hoped that he could make the eagle come to the pipe. But Fringe-wing knew the bear man had great mystery power; she used to fly past the bear-man's pit either on the north or on the south, but never over the pit. But the bear man thought, "With this pipe I will now make the west wind blow toward the pit. I think if I lay my sacred pipe there it will make Fringe-wing come to my pit on that west wind."

The bear man then filled his wooden pipe in the pit and many eagles then came to it; but he gave them no heed. Just before evening, very high up he saw Fringe-wing herself. The bear-man's sacred pipe was laid in the pit. He took out his sacred snare and made motions with it as if catching the eagle, and Fringe-wing began to descend. At the fourth cast of the snare, the bear man caught Fringe-wing, the noose falling over the bird's neck. Fringe-wing fell to the ground with much noise. The bear-man pulled on his snare and dragged the eagle into the pit. As the eagle fell, she cried, "Hŭ-ŭ-ŭ-ŭ"! The bear man tied her wings and legs and bore her to the eagle hunting lodge.

The bird kept begging, "Do not kill me. If you do, all the birds will cease coming to you." She meant that the eagles would no longer come to the hunters' pits. "No," answered the bear man, "you ate my boy; now we will eat you!" Fringe-wing was much frightened.

As the bear man neared the hunting lodge he began to sing, "To my snare something came!" Then he cried, "Open the door, friends, take her in."

The door was opened. The bear man entered, and threw the eagle violently to the snare in the rear of the lodge, behind the fire pit.

"One of you go out," called the bear man, "and call all the black bears and the yellow bears from their pits—those of the north and those of the south. Cry, 'Old-male-black-bear has caught the eagles' chief.'" All the bears, the black and the yellow, heard the call; and they came in, glad that the eagle that had captured their boy was now herself taken.

Old-male-black-bear, the leader of the black bears, now sang the song which I have said my father sang in his eagle ceremonies:—

Old-male-black-bear, your kettle is moving to the fire.

Old-male-black-bear, your kettle is on the fire.

Old-male-black-bear, your kettle is being heated on the fire

Old-male-black-bear, your kettle is red hot!

And he sang the song again, "To my snare something came." Then the bear man said, "I will now put my snare over something that I will eat!"

And he shook his rattles over Fringe-wing. "Get the sacred knife," said the bear man to the other bears, "and we will cut her up!"

They brought the knife to their leader, when Fringe-wing cried, "Listen you, just once!" "She wants to speak just once," said the bears, and they listened. "Friends," said Fringe-wing, "I want to become part of your ceremony; and I will make all my eagles excited [without self control] so that you may catch many. If you kill me, you will catch no more eagles. But if you spare me and let me become a part of the black bears' ceremony you shall call me the black bears' sister."

Then Fringe-wing gave the black bears a song, saying, "You sing this song when a woman menstruates, put sage at the four corners of the fire pit, and have her walk around it, and you will catch many eagles."<sup>1</sup>

"But I give you a new rule," Fringe-wing added, "Let no man touch a woman at the eagle hunting lodge. This may seem hard to you, but it cannot be helped. If a young man touches a woman, harm will come to him. And now I will turn into an eagle again, this time into a common eagle; for I will now be like other eagles, and no longer as I have been."

The black bears agreed to all this; the bear man, Old-male-black-bear, brushed her off and Fringe-wing flew away.

But the old black bear father did not get back his son. We think the eagles had eaten the boy; the story does not exactly say they did, but we infer they did so.

---

<sup>1</sup>It was an inviolable rule of the eagle hunting lodge that the hunters avoid cohabitation.—G.L.W.



## THE SACRED PIPE OF THE BLACK BEAR CEREMONIES<sup>1</sup>

In an Hidatsa village at the mouth of the Knife River, the villagers played the "stick and round stone," gambling game. Each player had a stick about six feet long, of ash, with stripes made by peeling off sections of the bark. The stone was of black pipe stone,<sup>2</sup> about three and a half inches in diameter, with a small hole in the center (Fig. 15c).

Two men, playing the game, cast their sticks which fell on either side of the stone. The two players ran up and both claimed the count. "I have won!" "No, I!" they cried, until they became angry; and one, in a pique, seized one of the sticks and, putting his foot on it, broke it in two. Soon the leg he had used in breaking the stick began to swell, for it was a sacred object and an inimical spirit went into the man's leg poisoning (sic) it. The leg swelled to great size so that the man could not walk.

Soon after this, the villagers prepared to go on a hunt. The sick man had four wives, who asked him, "Do we go with the villagers, husband?" "No," he answered, "I cannot walk, and I am too heavy to be carried." "We will ask some young men to carry you," they said. "No," he answered, "I cannot go." "Very well," said his wives, "we will leave you a great pile of wood for fuel and water and corn and other provisions." Thus they did, and joined the rest of the villagers. The sick man, alone in his earthlodge, wept and cried.

One evening, he heard the voice of a woman without, crying, "My Heart, I wonder how you are. How are you getting on? Perhaps you have died or killed yourself!" It was one of his wives, the one he did not love, who had returned to him. She entered the lodge. "Your other wives have gone. I, for whom you did not care, hid myself, slipped away from the camp, and now have returned to you. I want to live with you. If you die, I want to die also." She put her arms around his neck and wept.

She cooked a porridge of maize and fetched water for the helpless man. As his provisions were now exhausted, she went about among the other lodges hunting for something to eat. The lodges were bare, but

---

<sup>1</sup>Related by Frank Packs-wolf, an Hidatsa, born about 1894.

In the summer of 1911, Packs-wolf's widow sold me for the Museum the ceremonial pipe used in the Okipa, or Buffalo Dance ceremonies made famous by George Catlin. Packs-wolf who was keeper of the Okipa ceremonial objects, had died the previous winter. The Mandan, learning of the sale, were deeply vexed, and Packs-wolf's widow, much alarmed, brought another pipe, almost a counterpart, which she begged me to accept instead, agreeing to relate the story and ceremonials pertaining to it.

The story as below, was related by her son, Packs-wolf's widow listening and occasionally correcting. It seems a variant of the tale of the giving of traps and snares to men by the sacred black bears. See accounts by Wolf-chief, Pepper and Wilson.

The story was told the night of July 21, 1911; it was begun about eleven o'clock and ended about four in the morning. Refusal to accept a sacred tale at the hour offered is interpreted by a Mandan or Hidatsa as tokening the disapproval of the gods.

It is an Hidatsa tale.—G. L. W.

<sup>2</sup>A hard gray clay blackened by baking.—G.L.W.

under the rafters along the beams that lay on their exterior supporting posts and in nooks and crannies, she found here and there corn kernels which the mice had stored away.

The next day she went around in the lodges, seeking corn which the mice had hidden; in the timber along the river, she hunted for rose pods. At the last lodge, the one farthest from her husband's, she heard singing. Much astonished, she stopped and listened. A voice within was singing sacred songs. "I will see who that is," she said. She entered the earthlodge, but found no one within. She returned home, but did not tell her experience to her husband.

The next day she went through the village again to search for maize kernels. Again, she approached the earthlodge that was farthest away and again heard the singing. It was a man's voice, she thought; she entered the lodge but saw no one. She went on, seeking corn the mice had stored, and wondering what the singing meant.

The third day, as she sought corn kernels, she heard the singing as before. "Strange," she thought, "I am sure I heard someone singing in that earthlodge, but I cannot find any one there. She entered, but the lodge was empty. She found a little corn here and there in the other lodges, and went home.

The fourth day she went around the village and in some forgotten corners found a little corn. She came near the lodge where she had heard singing, and again heard the voice. "I will go in again and find who or what it is that sings," she thought. She entered and looked around, searching under the rafters and in the corners. She thought the singing might be by something so small that she had overlooked it. She found nothing.

She had turned to go out when she saw, hanging above the door, a snare of the fiber of the plant that was used to make rabbit snares and magic snares. When she came home she told her husband her experience. "I wonder if it was the snare that sang the song," she said.

"It must be that it was," said her husband. "I wish you would go and get it; we are in distress and it may help us." The woman went and brought the snare. Her husband hung it on the wall, in the place of honor in the rear of the lodge. "Search in the lodge for some buffalo-tail hairs," the man said. "We will make snares for snow birds."

The villagers had left in the late fall and it was now about time for snow birds, for these birds haunted the village in winter. Fig. 16a shows how snow bird snares were made. We used to clear off the snow from a little hillock on the river bank near the village, making a bare place

about three feet square. The snares were set in a row through the middle. The birds could see the bare spot in the snow from quite a distance.

The woman found some of the hairs, which her husband twisted and made into snares. These they set and caught many birds. "Good," said the man to his wife, "we can live through the winter on the birds we catch."

One day the woman came in and said, "Every time I go down to the timber along the river for wood, I see something with long ears." She had seen some rabbits. "I will make snares to catch them," said her

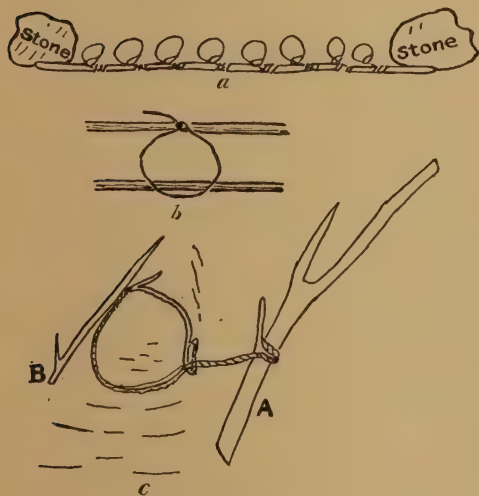


Fig. 16



Fig. 17

Fig. 16. Three Snares: *a*, A Snowbird Snare; *b*, A Long Snare laid on Two Poles in the Place of Honor in the Eagle Hunting Lodge; *c*, A Rabbit Snare.

Fig. 17. A Deer Snare.

husband. "When you go again for wood, fetch me some fiber to make snares." This the woman did the next time she went for wood. The fiber is made from the bark, which we strip from the plant when it gets dry in the fall.

The man gave the snares to his wife. "You will find little paths or runways in the timber. Set your snares in the paths; we may catch some of the rabbits." The woman bound each of the snares to a stick for a drag and looped the noose open over a tiny branch, directly in a rabbit's runway. A rabbit caught in the snare could not run far with the drag (Fig. 16c). The woman caught many rabbits with the snares. She set a



number of them and every time she came back from gathering wood, she brought in three or four rabbits.

But one day she said, "Husband, every time I go into the timber I see something big; it has long ears and a white tail." "We call that a deer," said her husband. "Next time you go into the timber, bring me more of the snare fiber." The woman did so, breaking the plants off near the ground, and gathering them up into a great bundle. From the fiber, the man made a snare for deer. When it was finished, he said, "Take this into the timber and hang it where there are deer tracks. Deer have regular paths which they use at night. Put the snare at the height you think the deer will carry his head. Tie a log to the snare for a drag. The deer will put his head through the noose; when caught he will leap away but will soon be wearied or brought to a stop with the drag. The woman took the snare into the timber and adjusted it over a deer path (Fig. 17).

The next morning she found the snare gone but she could see the tracks of a deer and the path of the drag. She followed and found the deer caught fast. She drew near and hit the deer on the head, killing him. Using the snare as a rope she dragged the carcass home. Outside of her lodge she called out, "Husband, say 'Thank you' that I may know you appreciate what I have done." "Thank you," called her husband from within, although he did not know for what it was. "I have a deer out here," called his wife. "Bring it in," called her husband, and she dragged the carcass into the lodge.

"We can live all through the winter on the deer we snare," said the man joyfully. "I thought we could live through the winter on rabbits, but deer meat is much better. We are now saved." He showed his wife how to cut up the carcass. The woman opened the belly and ate the liver and kidneys raw. The rest of the meat she cut into slices and hung up to dry. That same evening she set another snare in the timber in another place. The next morning she found another deer was caught; she dragged the carcass home. She brought the deer into the lodge; her husband was very glad. "We can get through the winter and part of the summer on this meat," he cried. "It is a great store." In the evening the woman took out her snare and set it again. The third morning she found another deer caught, which she dragged home. She set the snare as before; but this time she went out earlier in the day, in the fore part of the afternoon. She was returning and was halfway home, when from a hill she saw, across the river, a man trying to kill a buffalo bull he had wounded. The woman watched the man as he finally killed the bull. She

thought, "I will go to that man and he will give me some meat." She crossed the Missouri on the ice and approached the man. He seemed angry because she had come. He was sullen and rude, but said nothing. The woman noticed that his hair was combed forward, then bent backward.

The man cut off the buffalo's head and four legs, as Indians did. Each time he cut off a leg he threw it in a different direction, one to each of the cardinal points. He also threw away the bull's head, not offering the woman anything. He pierced a hole in the muscles of the buffalo's fore legs above the severed joint (which was always the second joint), passed a thong through, drew the two legs together, and tied them. He now fastened the legs by the thong to the tail of his snowshoe and started dragging the carcass with him, toward the north.

The woman gathered up the rejected head and legs and bore them home to her sick husband. She found her husband weeping. "Why do you weep?" she asked. "I feared some enemy had found you; you did not come home for so long," he answered. His wife said, "As I came back from setting my snare, I saw a man on the opposite side of the river, killing a bull. I went, expecting he would give me some meat. He threw away the head and legs, fastened the dead bull to the tail of his snowshoe and went toward the north."

The next morning the woman found another deer in her snare, the fourth she had caught. She killed it and had dragged the carcass about halfway home when she looked up and saw, as before, a man killing a bull. It was in the same place and the bull had been wounded. The woman went on home and told her husband. But her husband did not want her to go to the strange hunter this time. "Do not go," he begged. "No, husband," she answered, "let me go. He may give me some meat." She crossed the river and approached the hunter. He was not the same man she had seen before. His hair stood straight up over his forehead, not combed back again as was the first hunter's. He said nothing to her, but he did not act sullenly. He cut off the dead bull's legs and head and threw them to the woman. He tied the [stumps of the] forelegs of the carcass together, fastened them to the tail of his snowshoe, and went off toward the north.

The third day about the same time, a little after noon, the woman thought, "I wonder if there is a man today killing a wounded bull at that place across the river?" She went up on the roof of the earthlodge and, sure enough, across the river she saw a man killing a buffalo. She called down through the smoke hole: "I see a man killing a buffalo bull across

the river. May I go there and get some meat?" "Yes," her husband answered, "you may go this time."

But when the woman came to the hunter she saw that he was the man she had first met. His hair was combed forward and then back. He treated her sullenly and, as before, threw the rejected parts of the buffalo's legs to the four points of the compass; he also threw the head away. He tied the buffalo's forelegs together, fastened them to his snowshoe, and went off toward the north. The woman gathered up the cast-away legs and head and bore them home. She told her husband all that had happened.

The next day, again, at about the same time, she went up on the roof to look, and again saw a man killing a wounded bull. She called through the smoke hole, "Husband, a man is at that place and he is killing a bull. I want to go and get some meat." Her husband did not want her to go, but at last gave his consent.

As she approached this time she saw that the strange hunter was the same one she had seen the second time. His hair stood upright over his forehead. He smiled kindly at her. He cut off the head and legs of the dead bull, took out all the intestines and piled them in a heap before the woman. Then he tied the carcass to his snowshoe and went off toward the north. The woman carried the legs and entrails home and said to her husband: "This man did not speak to me, but his face was kind, he smiled and gave me some meat today, the intestines and insides." "That is well," said her husband.

"Husband," said the woman, "I want to follow those men and find out where they go. I want to know where their home is and who they are." "Go," said her husband. "Find where the men live."

The woman pounded corn and made many balls of four vegetables. Her husband filled his pipe and said, "Take this pipe with you." She started early the next morning with the pipe and corn balls. Before she left, she had fetched much wood and cooked a store of food for her husband, saying, "If I do not return within four nights, it will be a sign that I am dead."

She found the big tracks of the hunters' snowshoes, and followed their trail toward the north. Her husband wept to himself after she had gone. The trail led the woman to a big stretch of timber, where she saw a lodge with smoke coming out of the smoke hole. It was an eagle hunters' lodge. The woman thought to herself, "These may be enemies, and I may be killed. But if they are the men I saw, I am safe." She went on, before the lodge door she found much meat drying on stages. She stopped,



hearing voices speaking in her own language. "Servant (*Íxtaki*) that sits close to the door, fetch me some wood," someone called.

*Íxtaki* is a black bears' word. When men went on an eagle hunt they used many eagle hunt words; *íxtaki* was one of these words and meant gray or grizzly bear. The eagle hunting party impersonated the black bears, the hunters representing the bears.

The one within the lodge who had been addressed, arose and opened the door; but seeing the woman standing outside, he let the door skin fall.

"There is an Indian outside," he cried. All the bears in the lodge, for the eagle hunters were really black bears, went tumbling over one another to the back part of the lodge where they fell in a great pile in their fright. A voice now called again to the servant, "You go out and fetch in that wood!" The servant came out of the lodge.

"Woman, come in," the black bears now called. The woman did so and saw the lodge was full of men sitting in a circle around the wall. Those on the left had the hair combed forward, turned up, and then back again, somewhat like a duck's tail.

In an [eagle hunters'] lodge the door faces south.<sup>1</sup> Thus it was the men on the east side who had their hair turned back. Those on the west side of the lodge had their hair standing upright on the fore part of the head.

The woman sat down near the door on the west, or right hand side. As she came in the men on the east side cried out, "This woman is going to be my wife." "No, she is going to be my wife!" The men on the west side listened, but said nothing. The servant cooked a buffalo paunch and gave it to the woman.

The men seated on the west then said to the others: "If you wanted this woman for a wife you should have treated her kindly. You did not do so. You threw the head and legs away each time you killed a bull. It is we who have called this woman to us here, not you. Our son down at the village is in great need and we want to help him, for our hearts are troubled for him. This woman is our granddaughter." Thus the black bears who sat on the west side and were the older bears, adopted the woman.

She now laid her pipe down before the bears on the west, for she now knew it was they who had called her. She also laid down the corn balls she had brought. The bears took the pipe and gave it to the last one who sat nearest the door. He did not light it, but passed it to the

---

<sup>1</sup>Wolf-chief thinks this not the rule. See Fig. 3 and accompanying account.—G. L. W.

next, saying, "Let us see what you can do!" So also said the next, and passed the pipe along. Thus did each, until the pipe came to the small lean one at the end who smoked it, pausing to say deridingly, to the others, "You are all great when you talk! You say big words. You are always saying, 'I can catch eagles no matter how high they fly in the sky. I can catch them with this snare down in the big timber!'" Saying this, he handed the pipe to his neighbor, who also smoked.

The bears also passed the corn balls, which were refused by all, until they came to the little bear. He divided the balls among the others saying, "I do not like you men. Therefore I give you only little pieces."

When the bears had finished smoking the pipe they asked the woman when she was going to return home. "I am going back right now," she answered. Hearing this, the bears all arose, went out, and each got his own meat on the drying scaffold and cut off a little piece from the end. They gave the woman these pieces and a pair of snowshoes saying, "Pack this meat on your back and put on these snowshoes and you will get home safely. Now we will tell you what we want. We want your husband to make us a ceremony." And they explained to her the rites and rituals of the ceremony until she understood all. "Four nights hence," they said, "we will come to your village."

The woman went home to her husband. Outside the lodge she heard him weeping and calling for her, for he thought her dead. "Husband, I am here," she cried. "Good," he cried joyfully; "I am happy, for I have been weeping, thinking enemies had killed you."

The woman put down the meat she had packed on her back; at once it became a great pile, each small piece turning into one whole piece as big as that from which it had been cut.

She told her husband how she had followed the snowshoe tracks; how she was called into the bears' lodge; how those on one side wanted to make her wife and how those on the other side forbade it; how the pipe went around four times; how at last the little lean one lighted it. Then she told how the bears would all come to the village in four nights.

Hearing her story her husband was happy. "Perhaps," said his wife, "the bears will doctor your leg." "Prepare the feast for the ceremony," said her husband; "Get your corn out of the cache, where you buried it. Cook and prepare the feast."

The fourth night the black bears came. Their leader carried a buffalo skull, the rest following him; one carried a wooden pipe. The bears sang as they came. The woman opened the door and they entered, the one with the buffalo skull coming in first. The woman paid him a

good buffalo robe for the skull; for she and her husband had a hundred buffalo robes that they had taken out of a cache where they had kept them. For everything the bears brought their son (her husband), for the snares and the pipe, for every article, the woman paid the bears one buffalo robe.

The little lean man who had lighted the pipe was really a bent-stick snare (spring snare). He became a man and lived with the other hunters in the eagle hunters' lodge.

"Son," said the bent-stick snare man to the woman's husband, "I will doctor your leg." Above the sick man's ankle he placed bait and set his snare over it. He watched. Soon a snake's head came out of the sick man's leg at the ankle. Evidently the snake wished to eat the bait, but it jerked its head back without doing so. Soon the snake thrust out its head again, and at last, began to eat the bait. The snare jerked,



Fig. 18 (50.1-6018). A Wooden Ceremonial Pipe.

catching the snake by the head. The bent-stick snare man pulled, the snake resisted; but the man slowly pulled the snake out of the sick man's leg. It was a bull snake.

This is the story of the ceremony of the *hacida* or black bears. It is the ceremony which my husband, Packs-wolf made, when he received this wooden pipe, the snares, and all the objects of the medicine bundle that go with this ceremony. This ceremony includes [the rights to] all traps and snares, as the fish trap and the rights of eagle hunting, etc.

*Objects in the Bundle.* As I learned from my husband, Packs-wolf, the following objects were in the medicine bundle:—

1. The carved wooden pipe (Fig. 18).
2. The buffalo skull. This was always used in every ceremony as the River, the Sun, the Black Bears' ceremony, etc.
3. Two rattles.
4. Necklace of eagles' claws.

---

<sup>1</sup>A Blackfoot origin myth for eagle trapping will be found in this series, vol. 2, 135-137. In this account the usual form of pit is used, but for bait human flesh and the body of the coyote were employed. This is not to imply that Blackfoot eagle trappers made a practice of baiting with human flesh, that being the special procedure developed in the myth.



5. Several snares used for tying eagles' feathers; for whenever an eagle was caught, one feather was offered to the snare.

6. When my husband performed the rites of this ceremony, he tied a snare to each of his wrists, and to the snare a flint arrow head.

7. An eagle's head.

8. A long snare. When eagle hunting, the hunters laid the snare in the honor place of the hunting lodge, upon two poles, as if ready to catch eagles (Fig. 16b).

9. One young black bear's skin.

10. A small digging-stick. In olden times the digging-stick was used to dig out the eagle hunter's pit. One singer who was the leader of the party went out and sang his sacred songs; he sang and marked out the corners with the digging-stick, and the pit would be dug out afterwards with an iron hoe.

We continued this ceremonial use of the digging-stick because it came down to us from our fathers. The digging-stick in the bundle was small because of late years it was used only ceremonially; it was no longer used for actual digging. In olden times the whole pit was dug with a digging-stick [of greater size.]

11. A magic pot. The hunters prayed to the magic pot. The story is that once some hunters had no fire; but they danced around the pot and it boiled. Since then it has been called a sacred pot. (Goodbird here volunteers that in olden times the pot was of clay, but is now of tin.)

12. Wooden pillow; an ash stick that represented a snake, and was used as a pillow.

13. A newly made grass snare was hung on the west side of the newly built eagle hunters' lodge. Another was hung on the east side. A third, hung over the honor place in the rear of the lodge, was called the Honor Man. (This perhaps was the singing snare of the story.)

14. When my husband sang the songs of this ceremony, he always tied a piece of sage to his scalplock; but this sage was not contained in the bundle.

## NOTES ON CAPTIVE EAGLES, OTHER BIRDS, AND ANIMALS

The Northern Plains tribes had no domesticated animal but the dog. The question is frequently asked why they did not domesticate the bison. Their use of the dog for draught purposes and their quick acceptance of the horse might lead us to expect the Indians to try to domesticate or, at least, tame the buffalo. To this we have no adequate answer. However, keeping captive wild animals and taming them, logically precedes their domestication. The writer has eagerly plied his informants for accounts of tamed or captive wild animals. Further, legends and myths give suggestions of the keeping of captive animals as sacred objects or medicines, as the owl, bull-snake, hawk, bison, or even grizzly; but such accounts are so obscured by mythic material that they cannot be accepted as evidence that such practices were common.

The following accounts obtained from Wolf-chief and Goodbird were recorded in careful detail in the hope that they might throw light upon the psychology of the barbarian in his first steps in the taming and domestication of wild animals.

*Captive Eagles.*<sup>1</sup> About the end of June, when the first June berries were ripe in the summer of 1876 and I was about twenty-seven years old, a rumor reached our village at Old Fort Berthold that small-pox was prevalent nearby. This alarmed us and the whole village population set out for the hills and proceeded about twenty miles up the Missouri to White Earth Creek. Then we turned directly toward the River. We turned south for a short distance and camped at the mouth of Little Knife River.<sup>2</sup>

We camped on the east side of the Missouri, about twenty miles north of Independence. On the bluff on the west side of the river was an eagle's nest. I wanted to cross to see if I could capture the young ones

---

<sup>1</sup>Told in August, 1913, by Wolf-chief, an Hidatsa, born about 1849.

<sup>2</sup>This should not be confused with the Knife River where the five villages formerly stood. The latter river is called *Mě́'tsəduəšiš*, from *mě́tst*, knife; *adu*, of; and *əš*, river or creek. It is named from the fact that we formerly had flint pits on both sides of the stream up to the mountain rising far back in the hills. These flint pits were found only along this river in this region. There is a certain hill called Digging Flint Hill near Spring Creek which is about eight hours journey from here, that is, about thirty miles to the hill and ten more beyond to the creek. Spring Creek lies about ten miles beyond the hill. It takes a day's journey to reach it and another to return.—Wolf-chief.

Little Knife River, in Hidatsa, is called *Mě́'tsəšiš*, meaning just Knife River. The other name is translated best perhaps, Creek of Knives, or Creek of the Flints.

which I thought old enough to be taken from the nest.<sup>1</sup> I made a raft of two logs joined together in V shape, with cross pieces laid on top and lashed down with rawhide ropes (Fig. 19a). I made a temporary paddle of cottonwood bark around which I doubled a green willow, cut a little thinner in the center, with the two ends joined and twisted together, and lashed it with willow withes (Fig. 19b).

I did not take long to make the raft. I picked up a few logs on the bank and bound the cross pieces with two rawhide ropes which I wound in

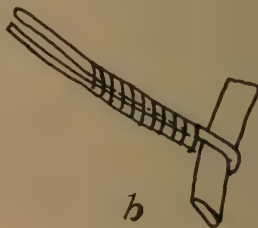
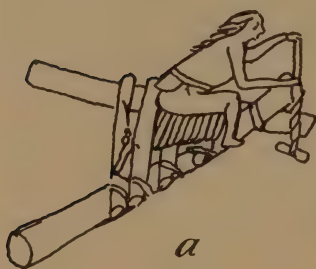


Fig. 19

Fig. 20

Fig. 19. a, Raft for crossing the River; b, A Cottonwood Bark Paddle.

Fig. 20. An Ammunition Bag and Powder Horn.

and out, as I needed. Two extra pieces of logs about eight inches thick were laid lengthwise on top of the raft to receive the robe upon which I sat.

I laid my double-barreled muzzle-loading shotgun behind me on the raft and took off my knife and belt, wrapping it several times around the gun barrel. I habitually carried my ammunition bag on my right side,

<sup>1</sup>Among the Nez Percé also "Eagles were seldom shot. They were taken from the nest while young and raised in camp. The first set of feathers was plucked, and a part of the second set; then the birds were set free." (Spinden, *ibid.*, 215. ●)

In 1900 Fewkes reported that at that time the Hopi, following certain offerings, took young eagles from the nests, and brought them to the Pueblo, where their heads were washed and sprinkled with prayer meal. Then the feathers were plucked and the birds strangled. They were buried in a special eagle cemetery, the bodies partly covered with stones. After the *Niman* ceremony wooden effigies and tiny bows and arrows sprinkled with prayer meal were placed on the eagle graves. (Fewkes, *ibid.*, 702).

Lewis (*Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806*. Edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, New York, 1905, vol. 5, 119) writing while in the Bitter Root Mountains, states (June 9, 1806): "The Cutnose or Neeshneeparkkeek, borrowed a horse and rode down the Kooskooske River a few miles this morning in quest of some young eagles which he intends raising for the benefit of their feathers; he returned soon after with a pair of young Eagles of the gray kind; they were nearly grown and pretty well feathered."

According to the Franciscan Fathers (*An Ethnologic Dictionary of the Navaho Language*, St. Michaels, Arizona, 1910) the Navajo also employed the same general method for eagle trapping: the hunter was concealed in a stick and weed covered pit; the bait was a rabbit dummy, "which was worked forth and back by means of a string attached to it" (p. 476); the bird was caught by its feet and neck; the beak filed with a stone and the down and tail feathers plucked. Later the birds were released. The hunt was also accompanied by song and prayer (p. 477). The Navajo considered eagles sacred and they had a prayer-stick and sacred name assigned to them.



but I now laid it with the gun and belt at the back of the raft. The ammunition bag (Fig. 20) was of dressed buffalo skin and held a small tin box of percussion caps, a small bag of buckshot, or small bullets, and wads made of shavings of kinnickinick, or some other green wood, rolled up into a small ball about the size of a marble, to fit the barrel of the gun. I had about twenty of these wads in my ammunition bag. The bag of shot was just a piece of skin folded over the bullets with a string tied around it (Fig. 20). My powder horn was tied to the ammunition bag. The powder horn was made of the horn of a three year old buffalo, the proper age of a buffalo to make such a container. One end of the horn was cut with a knob; the thong from which the horn was hung was looped around the horn on either side of this knob. The larger end of the horn was plugged with a piece of cottonwood bark. The horn was heated and the plug driven home; when the horn contracted, the plug fitted snugly. To secure the plug further, some tacks were driven through the thin edge of the horn into the bark. A piece of iron was twisted into an eye and driven into the end to receive the thong. A pin of hard June berry wood was used as a stopper for the powder horn. When loading the gun, I withdrew the pin with my teeth and poured the powder into the palm of my hand.

We rarely used small shot in those days for we seldom shot any small game. Ammunition was expensive and hard to obtain. Sometimes, when we had small shot, we melted it or molded it into buckshot or bullets. We did not esteem prairie-chickens for eating as much as white people and when we took them it was usually in snares. A bag was for ammunition only, not for game. We molded our bullets in those days in iron molds.

I laid my leggings and moccasins with the robe, thus making a cushion to sit on. I kept on my shirt. In paddling, I used the paddle alternately on either side of the raft. Sometimes I let my feet dangle in the water.

Whenever we crossed the Missouri, even in a bull-boat, we always removed our moccasins and at least partly stripped, laying aside our leggings. Crossing was always dangerous; a bull-boat might be punctured and sink, or some other accident might befall us and we would be thrown into the water. Therefore, we stripped to the clout whenever we crossed the river, for the water of the Missouri is very muddy and soon filled one's clothing, making it hard to swim. In crossing the river in old times a woman removed her leggings and moccasins, but retained her dress.

When I reached the other side of the river, I tied my raft to a tree with one of my four rawhide thongs, each about three and one-half feet long. I continued through the timber along the bank and emerged at a high bluff which I climbed. When I arrived at the top, I came to a steep place and looked for the eagle's nest which I knew to be below on a ledge of clay. The face of the cliff was of clay as are many of the bluffs along the Missouri. But I found that the whole ledge upon which I had expected to find the nest had fallen out, but far below, at the foot of the bluff, I saw something black. I climbed down to it and found that it was a dead young eagle. I knew there should always be two young



Fig. 21. An Eagle tied to prevent Flapping of Wings.

eagles in every nest,<sup>1</sup> so I searched for the second one, and soon saw it a short distance away, on some rising ground. Its wings were weak and it could not fly for any great distance. I gave chase. At the third flight, I overtook it, and threw my robe over it. It was a young golden eagle, with tail feathers about seven inches long. The dead eagle had tail feathers about four inches long.

With my hands, I pressed the robe down somewhat. Then I raised one corner and found the eagle's feet, crossing them one over the other and tying them securely with one of my thongs. I folded the wings back until they were about four or five inches apart, passed a thong underneath them at the shoulders and tied them so that the eagle could not flap them (Fig. 21). Then I wrapped my robe around the bird and carried it to my raft in my arms. Fig. 22 is a map of the bluff where the eagle's nest had been.

An eagle was rather dangerous to handle. My father, Small-ankle, was once caught through the arm with an eagle's claws which passed through his wrist. My father caught the bird's leg, just over the tendon, with his teeth, and forced it to loosen its grip. It was difficult to make an eagle release its hold when it had thrust its talons through a man's arm. Usually, one had to kill the eagle.

<sup>1</sup>According to Teit the Thompson Indians took half-grown eaglets from the nest, raised the young birds, and when they were full-grown, pulled out their tail feathers. They were then released. It was believed that unless the oldest eaglet in captivity is fed first, all will die. No mention is made of the pit method. (Teit, James, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia" *Memoirs, American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 2, part 4, 1900, 392).

With my eagle wrapped in my robe, I returned to my raft, laying the eagle on my gun. I tied one end of a rawhide rope to a log, passed it over the robe wrapped around the eagle, and tied the other end of the rope to a log on the other side. This was to prevent the eagle from rolling off into the river. I had taken my gun with me to the bluff, but had brought it back and laid it on the raft where it had rested before. I now paddled back to camp.

When I arrived on the other side again, I removed my things from

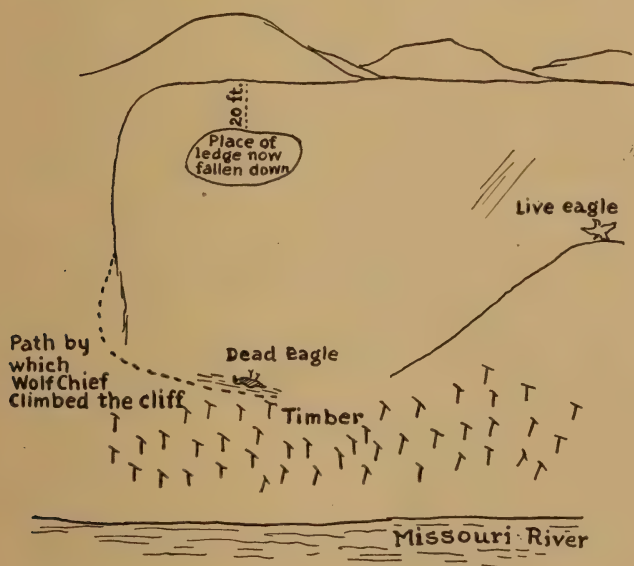


Fig. 22. Sketch Map of Bluff where Eagle's Nest was found.

the raft and dismantled it, recovering my rawhide ropes, and coiled them the better to carry them.

When I had gone up the bluff, I had, of course, put on my leggings and moccasins, but these I had doffed a second time, when I crossed the river. I now put them on and went into camp with my eagle. Then my father showed me what to do with the bird. "Tie it to a piece of log by its left foot," he said. I got out a strip of tent skin, about three inches wide and five or six feet long. I folded one end of this over the left leg of the eagle and sewed it with buckskin thongs several times (Fig. 23b). I attached the other end of the strip to a piece of log as a drag. I set the eagle behind our tent and took off the thong that bound its wings. The



bird shook itself and began to bite at its wings, probably to straighten its feathers.

I now made two round-headed bird arrows. It was already well on toward evening, but I went out into the timber along the river and shot two little birds with my arrows. I took a five-foot stick, pulled the

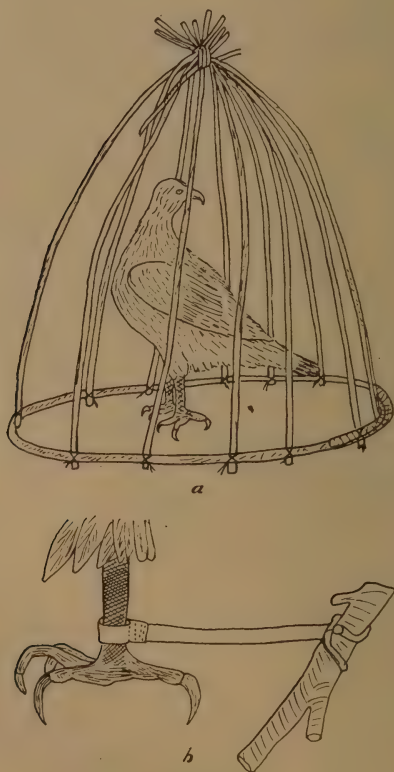


Fig. 23. *a*, The Eagle Cage; *b*, Eagle tied to a Log.

feathers off one of the small birds and stuck it on the end of the stick and tried to feed the eagle, but the bird would not eat.

A little later, at sundown, I tried again, but still the eagle would not eat. That night I left the eagle on the ground behind our tent. I had no fear of dogs, for those that approached the eagle appeared to be afraid of it. In the morning I tried again to feed the eagle, this time successfully. I used the stick as before, because I was afraid of the bird and the eagle was afraid of me.

That morning I hunted again with my bird arrows and killed four little birds. At noon I fed these to the eagle. The villagers were to remain in camp that day; our tents were pitched quite near the Missouri River, so that I had time to hunt. I broke off the wings of the birds I killed, and pounded the body somewhat to soften the flesh. The eagle ate all four of these small birds, gulping them down without chewing them.

In the afternoon I hunted birds again and killed three. I returned in the evening and chopped them up with a knife and fed them to the eagle from the end of my stick. The eagle ate them all. By this time, it had learned what I was trying to do and when I poked the birds at it, it opened its mouth for them.

We stayed in this camp three days and then set out on the return journey to Like-a-fish-hook village at old Fort Berthold. My father made a travois to carry the eagle. "Now," said he, "let us make a cage for the eagle." He told me to bring him some sticks of *midqratsi* willows. I brought in an armful about the diameter of my middle finger. "Now, make a hoop," he said, "about three feet in diameter. Tie these sticks around the hoop at four inch intervals, with the tops bent over to meet like tent poles."

I did as my father bade me. The first pair of willows bound to the hoop met at the top, as did the rest of the sticks, all of them above the first pair (Fig. 23a). We called these sticks the ribs of the cage.

Meanwhile, my father had prepared a travois. It did not have a basket mounted upon it, instead six sticks were bound crosswise to the two travois poles. The cage was set upon these sticks and fastened to them. "The tail feathers of your eagle," said my father, "have soft roots. If we make the floor of your cage of these sticks, laid across like bars, he will not be so apt to injure his feathers as he would if we tied his cage over a basket."

The travois was dragged, as usual, by being thrown with the thong at the forward ends of the poles, over the horse's saddle (Fig. 24). A tale is told of one of our men who was killed in battle. His friends made a travois without a saddle and brought his body home upon it. This was exceptional, for a horse travois was nearly always slung over a saddle.

When the people were ready to move, I put the eagle in the cage on the travois. The six-foot thong was still tied to the bird's foot, but I had thrown away the drag. I coiled the thong about the sticks on the floor of the cage so that the end did not drag on the ground.

As the camp moved on, I asked my father to watch the eagle while I rode ahead with my bow and gun. I started out about ten o'clock in the

morning and returned to camp about two or three; the villagers had pitched their tents on the south side of Little Knife River. I shot nine birds with my bow, some out on the prairie and some in the timber. When I saw some I thought I could approach, I dismounted, tied my horse to a tree and went ahead very slowly, until I had a good chance to shoot. When the birds were on the prairie I likewise dismounted and tried to slip up close to them. These prairie birds I shot were small and have tail feathers marked like golden eagle feathers. I shot four of these. The other five birds were small gray ones. I carried a rawhide bag tied to my saddle and dropped the birds into this as I shot them. This kind of bag is really a woman's bag, but it was quite proper for me to use it in such an emergency. It had a painted design and a red flannel border.

When I returned, I found the eagle had been taken out of the cage and was again behind my father's tent, with the drag attached to the thong

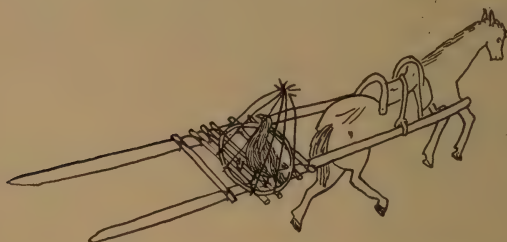


Fig. 24. Dragging a Travois carrying an Eagle.

on its leg. "Feed your eagle," said my father, "remember he is a god. Do not let him get hungry. He needs food every day. Keep him as something sacred."

I opened my rawhide bag and plucked the carcasses of the nine birds; the eagle looked at me expectantly as if he were hungry. "He recognizes you," said my father. "He is hungry also." I cut the flesh from the dead birds' breasts and fed the pieces to the eagle on the end of a stick. He ate all the meat. We could see his crop swell out, making the bird appear full-chested. Some of the people watched me feed the eagle. "That eagle must have a sack inside of him to hold so much food," they said.

All the people camped that evening and I went out shooting birds again. I killed two. When I returned, the eagle ate these also, but did not do so very hungrily. He acted as if he had had enough. I had not watered the eagle as I did not think it necessary. Eagles do not care to drink; at least, that is what we Indians say.



The next morning we struck our tents and resumed the march. As before, I went ahead with my bow and arrows. I killed five birds. I returned about one o'clock and found our camp on Shell Creek. I fed my eagle the five birds I had killed. The day was so hot that the people did not care to resume their march. So I hunted again in the afternoon and killed five birds which I fed to the eagle. He ate them all.

We moved again the next morning. I approached the eagle from behind and with my palms over its wings, put the eagle in its cage. The bird was quite gentle and did not struggle when I picked it up. I went ahead of the camp, hunting birds, and killed seven. About three in the afternoon I returned to find the band camped at L'Eau-Que-Mont Creek. My hands were quite sore from using the bow so much, as the string bruised my fingers. I fed the seven birds to the eagle. We camped at this place that night.

In the evening my hands hurt so that I thought I could not use my bow any more that day. I asked Garter-snake and Lean-bull (Mité-xadaxic, Buffalo-lean) to help me hunt birds. "All right," they said. They went out and returned after a while with six birds, one a meadow-lark. I did not go with them, but stayed behind in camp. I did not feed these birds to the eagle that evening, but waited until morning. I thought this best because I noticed in the afternoon that the eagle was hungry when I had not fed it since the night before.

In the morning, I said to Garter-snake and Lean-bull, "If you can, I wish you would kill some birds as we travel along." "We have discovered some ducks in this creek," said Lean-bull. "I have used all my shot and percussion caps, but I still have plenty of powder."

I gave Lean-bull some caps. We cut some bullets into small pieces and then bit these little pieces round, with our teeth, like shot. Lean-bull, Garter-snake, and I then mounted on our ponies and rode up the creek (L'Eau-Que-Mont). We discovered a flock of ducks in a pond and surrounded them. We killed thirteen, some with sticks. Many were too young to fly; some of the old ones could not fly because they had plucked out their feathers. Some of the ducks escaped to the tall grass around the pond, but we caught them. We killed some by throwing stones at them in the water. I remember the shape of the pond very well. We were all on foot when we killed the ducks.

We mounted our horses and returned to follow the camp. We saw the people seven or eight miles ahead and urged our horses forward to overtake them. They were camped at a place called Facing-the-timber-across-the-river, where there is a big spring.

Among the ducks we had killed were two old ones. I cut the flesh from the breasts of these two ducks and gave it to the eagle. He seemed fond of it, but was able to eat only the flesh of these two. This was about noon, just after I had reached camp. The camp moved again the next morning and reached Like-a-fish-hook village in the afternoon.

In the morning, just as we started, Lean-bull asked me to go with him to Iawati'hica-acie, or, Like-a-village = creek. Here we killed thirteen ducks with our guns, besides five more we caught and strangled. I put some of these ducks in my rawhide bag and tied others to my saddle. When we arrived at the village we found that the people had already reached home and that my father had put my eagle on the flat part of the roof of our lodge. The eagle was tied to the log drag as before.

"Feed the eagle," my father said to me. I did so. "Now put the rest of your ducks on the floor of the lodge where they will keep cool and not spoil," he said, when I descended from the roof. I had fed the eagle two of the ducks.

The next day I snared gophers which I skinned, cut up, and fed to my eagle. I also used the entrails of the gophers for bait and fished with them, catching the small, bony fish (Múa-atá'ki—white fish) we find in the Missouri. I fed these to my eagle. In this way, snaring and shooting small game, I had sufficient food for the captive.

I kept the eagle on the roof of our lodge until the latter part of July.<sup>1</sup> Then my father said to me, "The tail feathers of your eagle are now full grown; it is time to pluck them. Your eagle is beginning to get wild. He often tries to escape from his drag. Go up and get him." I mounted the roof of our lodge, threw my robe over the eagle, tied its legs together, and brought it down into the lodge. My father examined the bird. "Hold the eagle," he said to me. I threw my robe over the eagle and pressed the bird down to the floor. My father spread out its tail and looked for the fuzzy down at the root of the feathers. This down is the last part to come out on a feather. The down was there. "It is a fine eagle," my father said. "The black tips come down only a little way on the white part and the feathers therefore are exceptionally valuable. They are now ready to pluck."

With his thumb nail, he pushed back the root of one of the feathers at the extreme end of the row until the quill was well exposed. He caught

---

<sup>1</sup>Wolf-chief added later: "It was not unusual to keep eagles through the summer to pluck their feathers when they were full-grown. However, I never heard of anyone who attempted to keep an eagle through the following winter, after it was grown."

Maximilian (vol. 2, 383) writing of the Gros Ventre states: "The war eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) is likewise kept alive for the sake of the tail feathers, which they so highly prize."

the quill with his thumb and finger and pulled it out. It had a drop of blood on it. "That is the way to pluck the feather," he said. I now plucked the rest of the feathers. There were twelve altogether. "Now," said my father, "I want to take this eagle out into the hills and let it fly away. I want to take it out myself because I wish to speak to it."

He took the eagle out about a mile and a half from the village and cut the thong from its foot, setting it free. The eagle flew off a short distance and alighted on the ground again. I ran toward it to frighten it. It flew up in the air again, but soon settled on the ground. I thought now that I had better let it fly away whenever it wanted to.

I did not hear what my father said to the eagle, but he told me that he had spoken as follows: "I have wished you to go off safely. Fly away. Think only that we wish you to get along well in all things. We have kept you since you were young and fed you so as to help you. Now we want you to think of this and to help us in return whenever we have need. With your supernatural power give us plenty to eat."

The next morning Small-ankle said to me, "I will go out into the hills and see if that eagle had disappeared. I am afraid someone may kill it." He returned saying, "The eagle has gone."

In the eagle hunting ceremonies, the hunters often freed the eagles they had caught. It was my father's duty, or privilege, to release these eagles. For this reason he had told me that he wished to take my eagle out into the hills himself.

From these feathers I made a fan with which I fanned myself when I sat with others on the roofs of the lodges or when I was at some public gathering.

All the time I had this eagle, I kept it on the roof of our lodge, even when it rained. We knew that it was an open air bird and thought that the roof was the best place for it. Again, if the eagle were kept inside the lodge and if a woman should menstruate, the feathers would be marked with lines across the white of each plume. This would be caused by the eagle biting and marring the plume with its beak.

No one ever went to the roof of my father's lodge during this time, except to feed the eagle. It was not customary for anyone to go to the roof of my father's lodge unnecessarily, because of the sacred bundle of the big bird's ceremony which was kept in the lodge below.

The eagle never struggled or became much excited; but when it was hungry, it whistled as it sat on the roof. It also whistled if it saw other eagles in the air.

I never gave the eagle any water to drink. A few times, on very warm days, I tried to give it water when I thought the bird needed it.



I then put water in a tin pan and pushed it across to the bird's feet. But the eagle never paid any attention to it and I took the water away untouched. We know that some birds drink water, but we think that eagles are dry-in-the-air birds. I noticed that when the eagle blew out his nostrils, water came from them, so that I felt sure that he had water inside his body. Flying-eagle, an old Mandan, once told me that eagles never drink water. "I once tried to give an eagle water," he said. "The eagle was kept in our village by one of the men. I took a hollow buffalo horn, filled it with water, and stuck it in the earth, right beside the eagle. I let it stay there day and night, but the eagle never touched it."

While not very many of our villagers ever brought eagles home to raise them for their feathers, I do know a few instances in which this was done. However, we Hidatsa thought that eagles were sacred birds, and as a rule the people feared to keep them captive.

My brother, Charging-enemy, once penned up two young eagles. He made a little pen by sticking branches in the ground and tied a drag to a leg of each of the birds. Charging-enemy fed the two young eagles and when their feathers were well grown, he freed them. "They are sacred birds," he said, "I do not want to kill them." I once tried to raise another eagle, but for some reason, it died a short time after it was captured. When I was a boy, Rabbit-head had an eagle on the top of his log cabin in the village.

I know of no other instances, within my own lifetime, of eagles having been kept captive in our village. I never knew a captive eagle to be killed. They were always released after their tail feathers were plucked. I never knew of an eagle captured at the eagle hunting pits being brought to the village and kept in captivity. It was the rule at the pits that the captured eagles should not be killed unless quite a number had been taken. If only two or three eagles had been captured, they were always released again. They were sacred birds and we feared them. But if a considerable number of eagles were captured some might be killed if the captor so desired. Small-ankle had the right, or power, to kill eagles if he chose.

Once, a man named Bear's-tail was hunting. An eagle swooped to strike a jack rabbit. The rabbit leaped quite over the eagle and ran. The eagle rose in the air and swooped a second time. Again the rabbit leapt up and the eagle passed under him. Again the eagle mounted and a third time he swooped down, trying to strike the rabbit. This time he did not mount again for he had broken his wing at the place where lies the bone of which we make whistles. Bear's-tail killed the eagle with a stick and took the feathers.

*Captive Prairie Grouse.*<sup>1</sup> When I was about six years old my father found a nest of prairie-chickens with young ones in it. He set a snare near the nest to catch the mother hen. I was too young to know how he set the snare, but since then, of course, I have snared prairie-chickens myself and know just how it was done.

Near the nest the grass was trampled down, marking the old bird's path to the nest. My father fastened a horsehair snare to a stick and surrounded the nest with a circle of *ma-cû-kak-ca*, or buckbrush branches. He left the path open, for he knew that the hen, when she flew home,

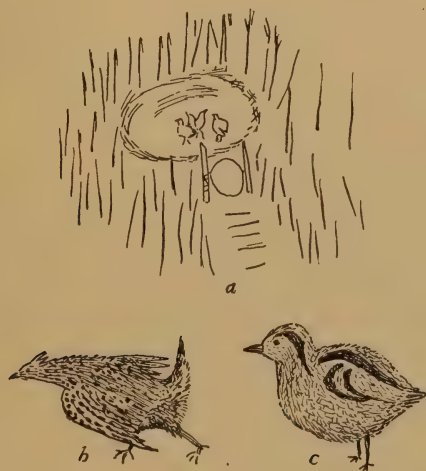


Fig. 25. a. A Prairie Grouse Snare; b, A Dancing Prairie Grouse; c, A Young Prairie-Chicken.

would be sure to alight near the nest and enter, as usual, by the path. The snare hung above the ground about the breadth of three fingers (Fig. 25a).

The nest was about a mile and a half from the village. My father set the snare in the morning and then went out to watch his horses. A little before noon he returned to the nest to see if anything were caught in his snare. As he approached, he saw wings flapping and found that the mother bird had been caught alive.

<sup>1</sup>Related in August, 1913, by Wolf-chief, an Hidatsa, born about 1849 and a member of the Tsistskadoxpaka, or Prairie-Chichen Clan.

Prairie-Chicken was one of the clans of the Hidatsa Four-Clan Moiety. According to Lowie (this series, vo. 21, 20) the members of the clan "did not consider prairie-chickens as sacred in any way except if a clansman had chanced to see one in a vision. Then he would pray to it and would not kill it under normal conditions; but if hungry he would do so."

In the springtime, during the month of April, the prairie-chickens have, what we call, their dance. Forty or fifty of them gather at the breeding place, early in the morning, and again at sundown. Some shake their tails and chase one another. Two may fight and pick at each other's necks or pull and haul one another about, shaking their wings as they do so (Fig. 25b). As a prairie-chicken struts around in the dance, he shakes his tail and makes his quills rattle and his wings are held out and shaken with a sound like the wind, "Sh-sh-sh-sh," while the bird cries, "Hi<sup>n</sup>-a-kü-kük akü-akü-kük!"

In nesting time only one prairie-chicken is ever found at the nest. We think it is always the mother. In old times, prairie-chickens were very plentiful because we did not care to eat them very much.

When two members of the Tsistska-doxpaka or Prairie-Chicken band quarrel, their friends laugh at them and say, "Let them pick at each other's necks. They are prairie-chickens."

My father took the prairie-chicken out of the snare and pulled out its wing feathers, so that it could not fly. There were eleven little chickens in the nest. They were not old enough to walk. He brought them home and made a nest for them at the back of our lodge. I remember that the little chickens got up on their feet inside of the nest and walked around a little, but not very much. Fig. 25c is like the little chickens my father brought home.

I do not remember noticing how my father carried the little chickens home, but I recollect asking him about it and he answered that he had his robe thrust into his belt on the left side, where he made a kind of pocket. His object in bringing them home was to raise them. The nest he made was of dry grass and was placed at the back of the lodge. Into the floor near the nest my father thrust a stake to which was fastened a thong about two feet long which he tied to one leg of the mother bird. The stake was about four feet from the nest, so that the hen could not approach it nearer than about two feet. This was to prevent her from trampling the young which she was apt to do in her fright, for she was very wild at first. Afterwards she became somewhat tamer.

As my father entered the lodge he said to me, "I have brought you some young prairie-chickens." I ran back with him to the rear of the lodge and watched him make the grass nest for the little chickens. Probably he had brought the grass in his robe, but I did not notice. In the evening my father brought in some buckbrush berries. These berries were black. He gave them to the hen, but she refused to eat. Then he offered them to the little chickens. One or two of them tried to eat them.



"Oh, if they are hungry, they will eat," said my father. He scattered the berries near the nest on the ground and left them.

He put the nest of chickens to the right of the medicine bundles in the rear of the lodge. He chose this open place because the dogs were unlikely to get at them. The hen began to eat the second day of her captivity. Before evening my father set her free; as her wing feathers had been plucked she could not fly. He did not give her or her young ones any water, but fed her with dry pounded corn. Sometimes he brought in rose berries.

The little chickens did not snuggle under the hen's wings as domestic chickens do, but huddled down beside her. She wandered around with her brood in the rear of the lodge, keeping hidden a good part of the time. Sometimes one of the little chickens strayed from her and she would whistle, "Sh-sh-sh-sh." The hen would answer, "Sh-sh-sh-sh," and run to the call.

The mother hen never became tame and would not come to our call, even for food. We had to throw the food upon the floor and when no one was nearby, the old hen and her brood came out and ate it. Sometimes, when everything was quiet inside the lodge, the hen led her brood to the fireplace and picked up the crumbs she found there. This she did sometimes, even if people sat there, as long as they did not stir, but if any one moved, she would take fright and run back to her place in the rear.

I was not allowed to touch any of the prairie-chickens, although I longed to catch them. My parents let me feed them, however. I liked to chase them and see them fly, but was not permitted to do so. The young ones, as they grew a little older, flew for short distances over the floor when alarmed. As the wing feathers began to grow again on the mother hen, she too tried to fly. Sometimes I wanted to shoot arrows at the chickens, but my father forbade it. "Don't! Don't! You might break their legs!" he cried, whenever I tried to catch them.

As the chickens grew older it was not uncommon to see them on the top of the bed frames which were about six feet high. We were afraid that they might try to fly through the smoke hole, but they never attempted to do so.

My father brought the birds home about the first of June and we kept them perhaps for three months. I do not know just when or how they escaped. When my mother swept the lodge, she used to prop the door open with a stick about seven feet long which raised the door close to the rafters. But she was always careful to chase the chickens back into the rear of the lodge. Of course, the fire screen in front of the

fireplace shut them in from the door unless they passed around it or flew over it. But one day when my mother was sweeping the house, she probably forgot and left the door standing open, for she usually shut it again so that the chickens would not escape. We presumed that the chickens went through the door at this time, but we do not know. We discovered later in the day that they were gone. I was much grieved at the loss. "Bring back my chickens," I cried to my father. He laughed. "By this time your chickens are gone," he said. "No one can catch them now." I did not weep when I discovered my loss, but at first, when I wanted to catch them and my father forbade me, I did weep.

I have heard that sometimes prairie-chickens that were caught in snares were kept in the lodge by their captors. Their wings were plucked so they could not fly away. However, all such captive prairie-chickens escaped in the end. Has-a-game-stick told me the same thing. I think he tried to raise young chickens also. I have likewise heard other people say that they had tried to raise young prairie-chickens. "They are hard to keep," they said. "In the end they always escape."

*Ducks and Geese.* In the old days no one in the tribe ever tried to raise a flock of young ducks or geese, but boys often caught a young duck and brought it home as a pet, but it always died in a day or two.

Last spring (1913) my little son, Paul, came in from the timber along the Missouri and said, "We have found a nest with eleven eggs in it. A big brown bird was on them. My mother is watching them now." "All right," I said, "I am glad, for we will get the eggs and eat them." But when I saw them I knew that they were eggs of red-legged ducks and said, "We have two hens sitting. It would be nice if we raised some young ducks." My wife put the eggs in a blanket and brought them home and put half of them under each hen.

On the ninth day we found one young duck hatched. It wandered out of the nest but I put it back under the hen. The next evening I found another young duck outside the chicken coop where the hen was sitting. The following day all the eggs were hatched. I fixed the door of the chicken coop so that all the young ducks were forced to stay in.

I set out a tub of water for the young ducks to swim in and put in some sand for them, for I knew that they ate sand. "I am glad," I said, "for I will raise many ducks. I will keep them in a warm room this winter." I told my son, Paul, not to molest them. After a short time, two of the young ducks died in the coop. I put them out in the sunshine and gave them sand and weeds. The third day another died. I do not know why they died for I gave them grain and old bread softened in water. They ate the bread, but in five days all the brood had died.

*Animals in Captivity.* We never had any owls in captivity in my tribe.

Buffalo were sacred and were never kept in captivity because we would have been afraid of the unfavorable consequences. We always prayed to the buffalo.

Long ago, my father once saw a medicineman named Snake-head-ornament who kept a live hawk and a live bull-snake as his medicines, or sacred objects. The hawk and snake understood the man who understood the hawk and snake also. He fed them and knew what they wanted. He kept them alive because he had a vision that these should be his sacred objects and should be alive. Snake-head-ornament had power to destroy one hundred tents; that is, he had the mystery power to cause the families of one hundred tents to be destroyed.

I never heard of anyone in my tribe having a fox in captivity or of trying to tame a fox.

But we were afraid to try to tame animals, for they were our gods, and it was thought a dangerous thing to attempt.

*Taming a Coyote.* About twelve years ago (1901), John Rush, my brother's son, found a coyote den with young ones in it. I told him to get them and I would try to raise them. The next morning he brought in three little puppies. I think he watched until the young ones came outside of the den to play and caught three. I put them in a room and said, "Let us keep these coyotes and see whether they can be made to grow up gently. I had once seen a white man picket a coyote by a chain. I thought these young coyotes might learn to follow one another around like dogs.

I knew that it is hard to tame coyotes. My father once had one, but when it grew up it ran away. "Coyotes are smart animals," he said. "They always run away when they grow up." I knew this, but I wanted to try taming one for myself.

When we have a horse that is wild, for example, a broncho that is being broken to the saddle, we know that the best way to make the horse gentle is to throw it down and pull out its eyelashes and its nose hairs. However, this was not often done. I believe this is a Crow custom recently introduced. Anyway, our people used to say, "The Crow do so." When I was old enough and began to break wild horses, I tried this method and found that it made the horses gentle. I do not know how the custom originated, but when a dog is angry, the hair on the back of its neck stands straight up; also when a horse is excited or frightened, his hair stands up. Perhaps that is why they become gentle when the hairs



are pulled out. Also, it was sometimes difficult to introduce a new horse into a herd. In that case, a man would put his finger first in the mouth of one of the horses of his herd and then in the mouth of the new horse. This would make the new horse content and he would join the herd.

I tried both these plans with the young coyotes. From all three coyotes I pulled out all the long black hairs on the upper lip. I put my finger into the mouth of one of them, then put the same finger into the second coyote's mouth, and then the third. I thought to myself, "I will give these coyotes the food they like best," I cut out cattle fat and threw it on the ground for them and they ate it.

I fed the coyotes every day, but at the end of two weeks they began to grow wild and when I opened the door they ran to a corner. I would say, "Come! Come!" but they ate the food I brought them, only after I had gone. I fed them meat and sometimes soup in a pan, but at the end of a month they were wilder than ever. They dug into the earth floor and I feared they would escape. I said to Jonnie Rush, "I am afraid that these coyotes will escape. Let us picket them." He went in and tried to catch one of the coyotes but it tried to bite him. "How are we going to catch these coyotes?" he said.

We went out and put a noose on the end of a stick and with this caught the coyotes, one by one, by throwing the noose over the animal's head.

It was the second day of May when we took the coyotes out of the cabin. I built a pen of logs outside my cabin and put a log floor in it. But in spite of this, about the sixth of August, the coyotes dug a hole in one corner and escaped. I have never seen them since.

I was about twelve years of age when my father brought home a coyote. About two miles from our village there was a spring called Máha-aku-watsacac, or Mean Spring. It was so named because several times wolves killed horses near it, or wounded them with their teeth. In a coulée near this spring my father, riding along on horseback, found a coyote den. A number of young ones were outside and he gave chase, but all escaped into the den, except one which he brought home to our lodge. It was about seven inches high.

We kept this coyote in the lodge. He always hid on the floor under a bed. If anyone threw him something to eat, he took the pieces of food in his mouth and carried them into the rear of the lodge where he would eat them. We kept him for about two months and he grew to be about a foot high. He was always very wild and was never tamed. We never allowed him near the dogs. At the end of two months we were having a grass dance in the village and the coyote became frightened and ran away.

*Human suckling of Animal Young.* At the suggestion of Doctor A. E. Jenks of the University of Minnesota, the author has made frequent inquiry as to whether Hidatsa women were known to have suckled the young of captive animals at any time, since such incidents are known to have occurred in the Old World. Wolf-chief was the only informant who knew anything of such procedure, stating that though he had never seen this done, he had heard that in ancient days a greatly loved puppy might be suckled by a woman. Apparently there are no traditions of such occurrences, though Wolf-chief related the tale of a man named Seven-bears whose father accidentally wounded a bear cub and brought it home to his wife, who, out of pity, suckled it at her own breast.









